2024 BUCCANEERS YEARBOOK

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The Buccaneers make their home at AdventHealth Training Center, a training facility and team operations center that opened in 2006 and is located mere blocks from Raymond James Stadium.

Formerly known as One Buccaneer Place, the facility was renamed AdventHealth Training Center in August of 2018 as part of a 10-year naming rights deal.

The 136,320-square-foot complex is complete with every amenity and advancement necessary to operate on the highest level, and is a combination of function, style and space. No effort was spared in its creation, from the towering steel-and-glass football entrance to the meticulously kept practice fields.

AdventHealth Training Center raises the bar in every category of team preparation. Players are able to enjoy an expansive and luxurious locker room, and a separate weight room building brimming with equipment. The team's training center is outfitted with everything necessary to keep players in top condition, from a large rehab area to a hydrotherapy room.

The facility also includes a comfortable team auditorium and player classrooms, press conference studio, media workroom and a modern, bright dining room where players and staff are able to take advantage of healthily prepared meals and snacks.

On the second story, the team's business staff operates, focusing on everything from community impact to accounting to marketing. Coaching offices and the Buccaneers' front office staff are also located on the second floor, overlooking AHTC's three full-sized practice fields.

In addition to the main facility, the new state-of-the-art indoor practice facility was completed prior to the 2017 season. The 100,000-square-foot facility features a full-sized FieldTurf playing surface, has an indoor clearance of 96 feet and seating for up to 3,500 guests. The space is used frequently for walkthroughs, practices, select training camp viewing sessions and several other major events hosted at AdventHealth Training Center over the course of the year. The facility provides players and coaching staff members with the luxury of escaping Florida's extremely hot and humid conditions and avoid missed practices due to inclement weather.

From top to bottom, AdventHealth Training Center is a complete facility that stands as one of the finest in the National Football League.

TAMPA BAY BUCCANEERS

2024 Official Team Yearbook

AdventHealth Training Center
One Buccaneer Place, Tampa, FL 33607
Tel: (813) 870-2700 • Fax: (813) 387-6317
www.buccaneers.com

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Editorial Production
Danielle Burns and Micayla Rossi,
Buccaneers Communications

Editorial Assistance
Nelson Luis, Michael Pehanich
Andrew Holman, and Ben Yarrington

Cover Design
Mike Aguilar

Photography
Kyle Zedaker, Tori Richman, Tampa Bay Buccaneers, AP, AP Images, NFL

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Executive V.P. Operations
Jeff Botwinick

Executive V.P
Julie Wanjon

Executive V.P. Business Development
Martin Lewis

Publishing Director
Jaime Ziegler

Executive V.P. Sales
Mitch Gibbs

Production Manager
Will Kilcommons

Executive V.P. Team Relations
Dave Gerschwer

Designer
Michael Schreiber

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2023 SEASON IN REVIEW

The team opened the season with a 20-17 win over the Minnesota Vikings in Week 1, securing their third consecutive Week 1 win, tying the longest-such streak in franchise history (joining the 1979-1981 teams).

In Week 3, wide receiver **Mike Evans** recorded five receptions, becoming the first player in Buccaneers history and the 59th player in NFL history to record 700 career receptions.

In Week 8, wide receiver **Chris Godwin** collected the 33rd receiving touchdown of his career, tying Cameron Brate for third-most in franchise history.

Lavonte David surpassed Pro Football Hall of Famer Ronde Barber (1,428) for the second-most tackles in Buccaneers history in Week 11. He would go on to finish the season with 1,480 career tackles.

2023 SEASON IN REVIEW

Baker Mayfield earned his first career perfect 158.3 passer rating in Week 15 vs the Packers, completing 22-of-28 passes for 381 yards and four touchdowns, with no interceptions, becoming the first visiting player to record a perfect passer rating at Lambeau Field.

With his two scores in Week 16, **Mike Evans** surpassed Davante Adams (active) and Rob Gronkowski (92) for the 12th-most touchdown receptions in NFL history. In doing so he surpassed Jerome Bettis, Priest Holmes and Marshawn Lynch (94) for the 27th-most overall touchdowns in NFL history.

In Week 18, the Buccaneers won their third consecutive division title and clinched their fourth consecutive playoff berth with a 9-0 win over the Carolina Panthers – the team's first shutout win since 11/21/2010 at San Francisco. **Todd Bowles** is the first coach in team history to lead the Buccaneers to consecutive playoff appearances, and consecutive division titles, in his first two seasons as head coach.

The Buccaneers have hosted six Monday Night Football games over the last four years, the most in the NFL, including two in each of the last two seasons, which also leads the league.

Tampa Bay defeated Philadelphia in the Wild Card game, 32-9, to advance to the NFC Divisional Round of the playoffs.

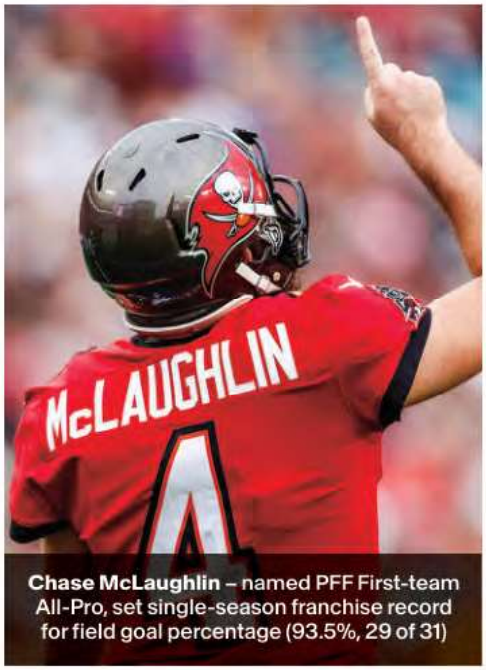
2023 SEASON IN REVIEW

Antoine Winfield Jr. – First-team All-Pro, Tampa Bay Buccaneers Walter Payton Man of the Year winner, Good Morning Football's 'Undisputed Best Defensive Back in the League,' NFC Defensive Player of the Month (December/January).

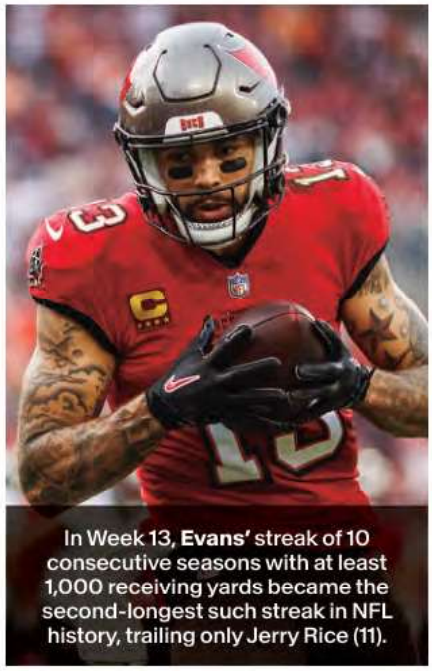
Baker Mayfield – Pro Bowl Games Offensive MVP, PFWA Most Improved Player, Week 15 NFC Offensive Player of the Week

Calijah Kancey – Rookie of the Month in November of 2023

Tristan Wirfs – selected to his third consecutive Pro Bowl (2021, 2022, 2023)



Chase McLaughlin – named PFF First-team All-Pro, set single-season franchise record for field goal percentage (93.5%, 29 of 31)



In Week 13, **Evans'** streak of 10 consecutive seasons with at least 1,000 receiving yards became the second-longest such streak in NFL history, trailing only Jerry Rice (11).

Jake Camarda – NFC Special Teams Player of the Month in September, set single-season franchise record for net punt average (50.1)

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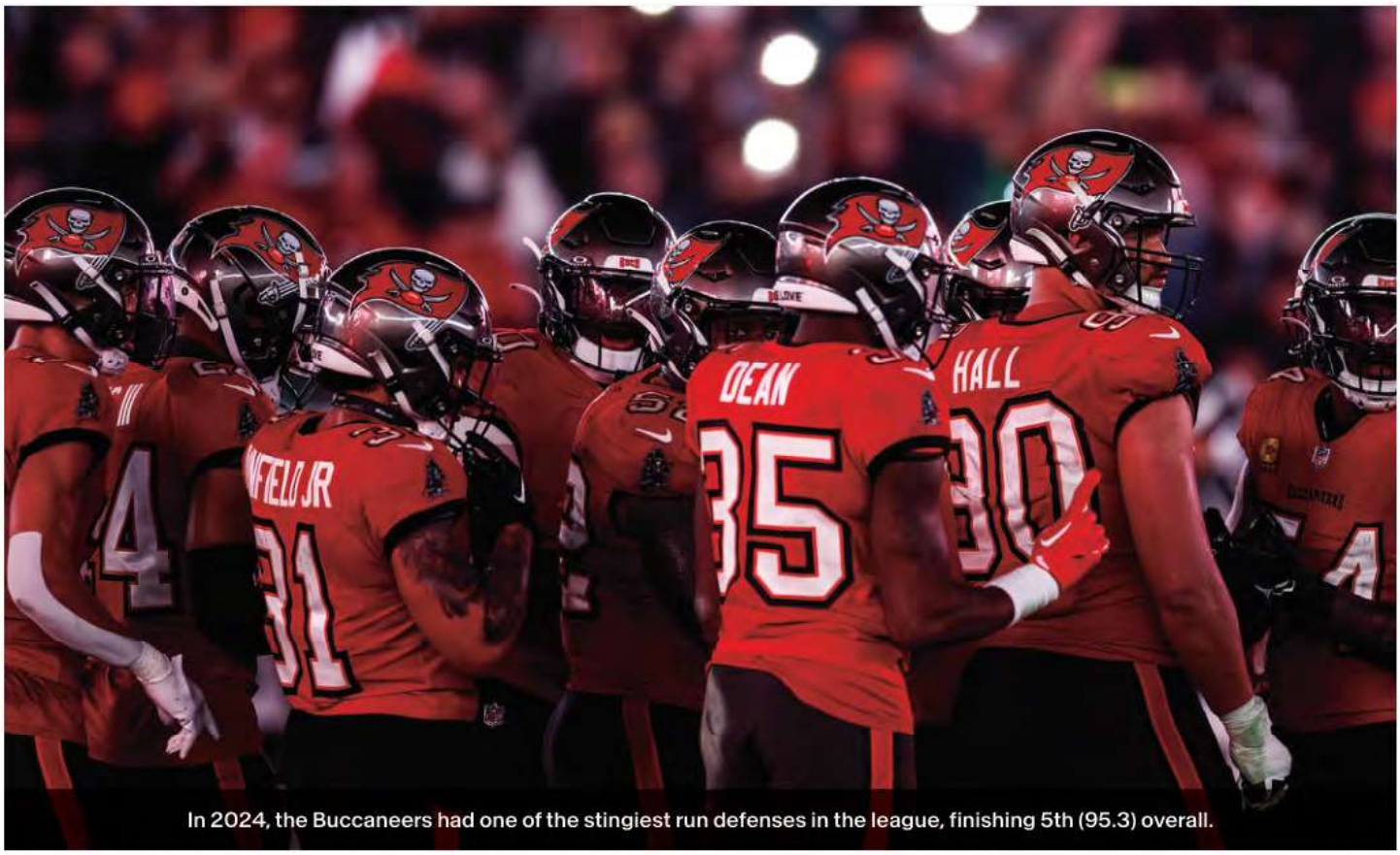
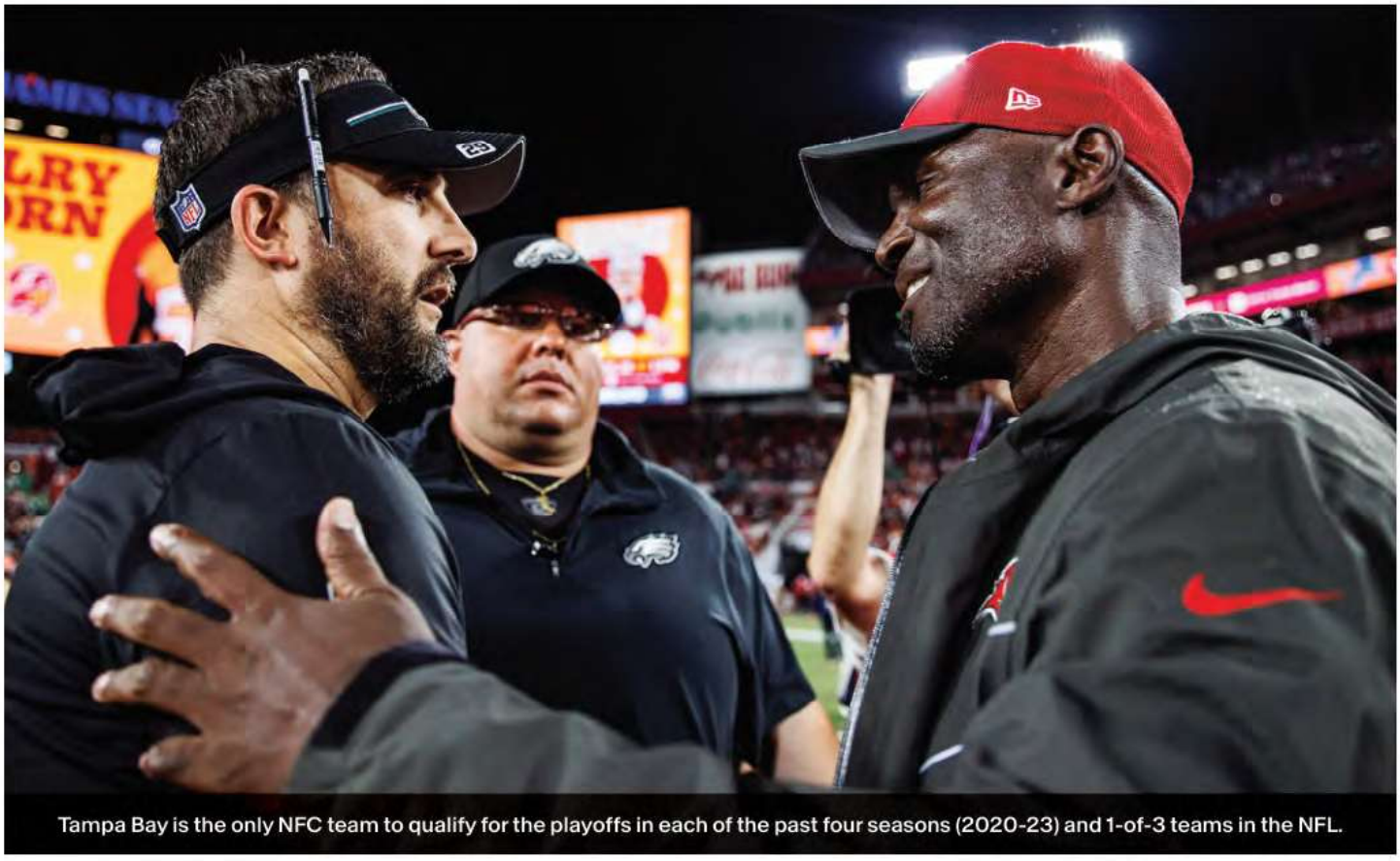
2023 SEASON IN REVIEW



In 2024, the Buccaneers had one of the stingiest run defenses in the league, finishing 5th (95.3) overall.



Tampa Bay is the only NFC team to qualify for the playoffs in each of the past four seasons (2020-23) and 1-of-3 teams in the NFL.

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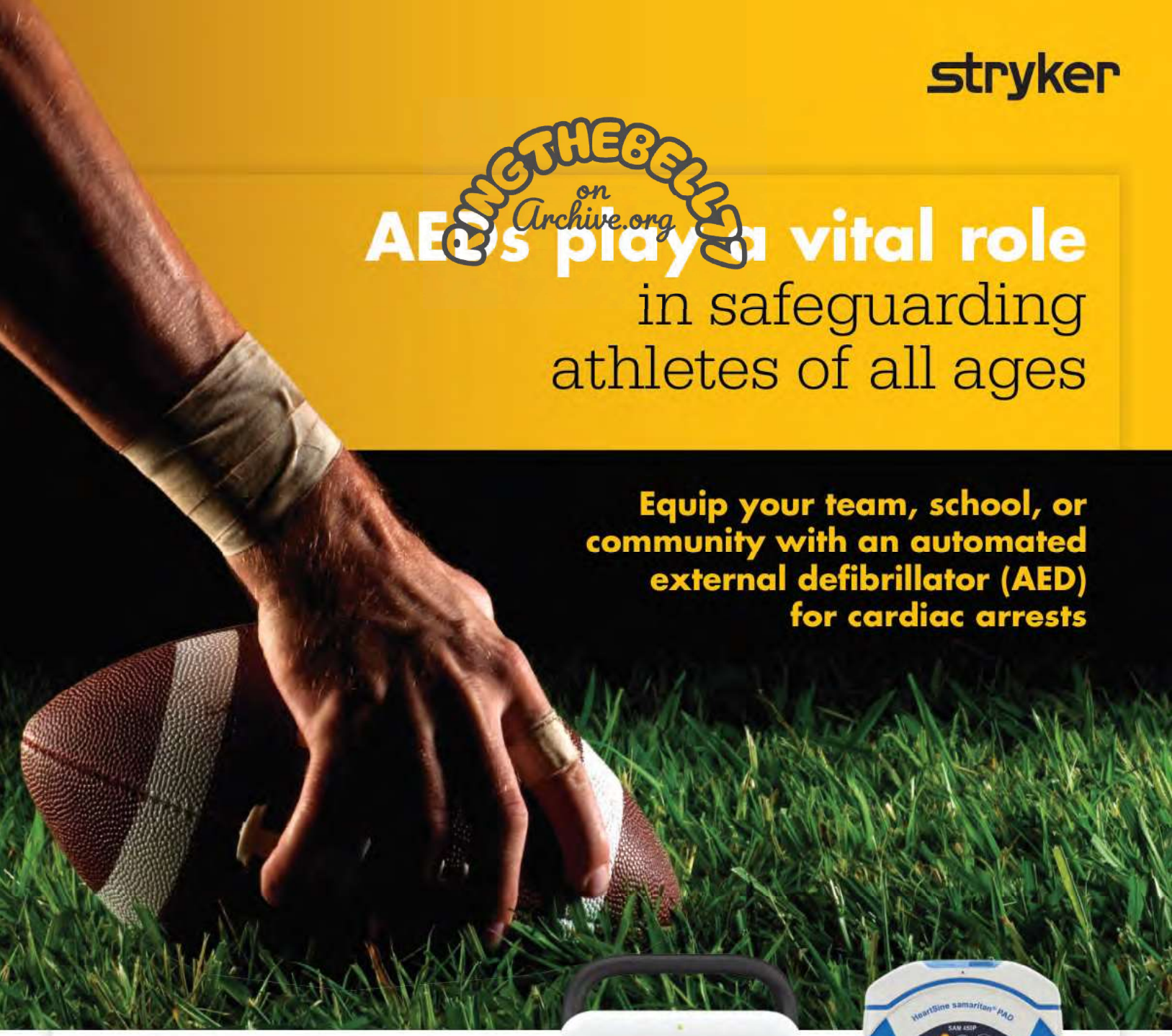

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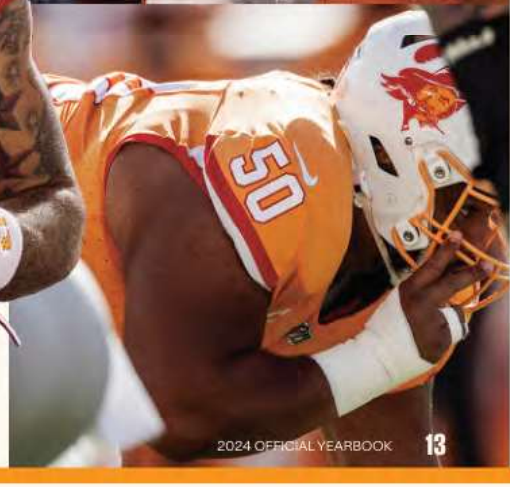
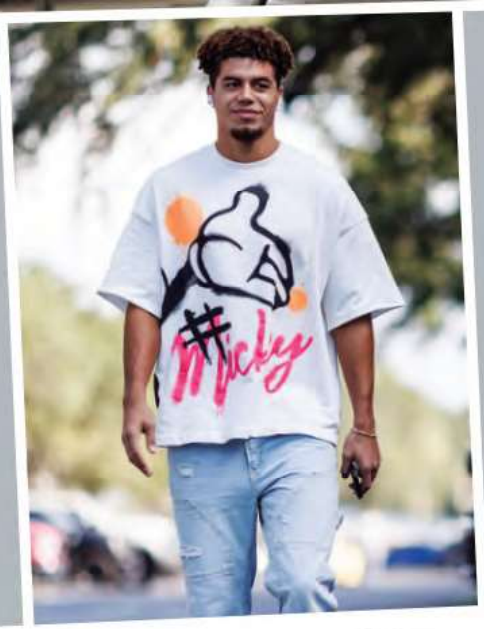
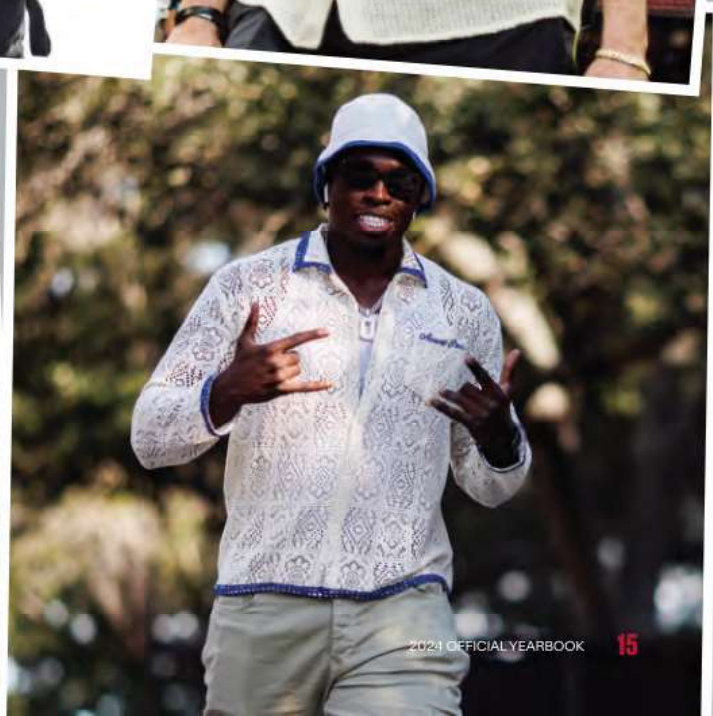
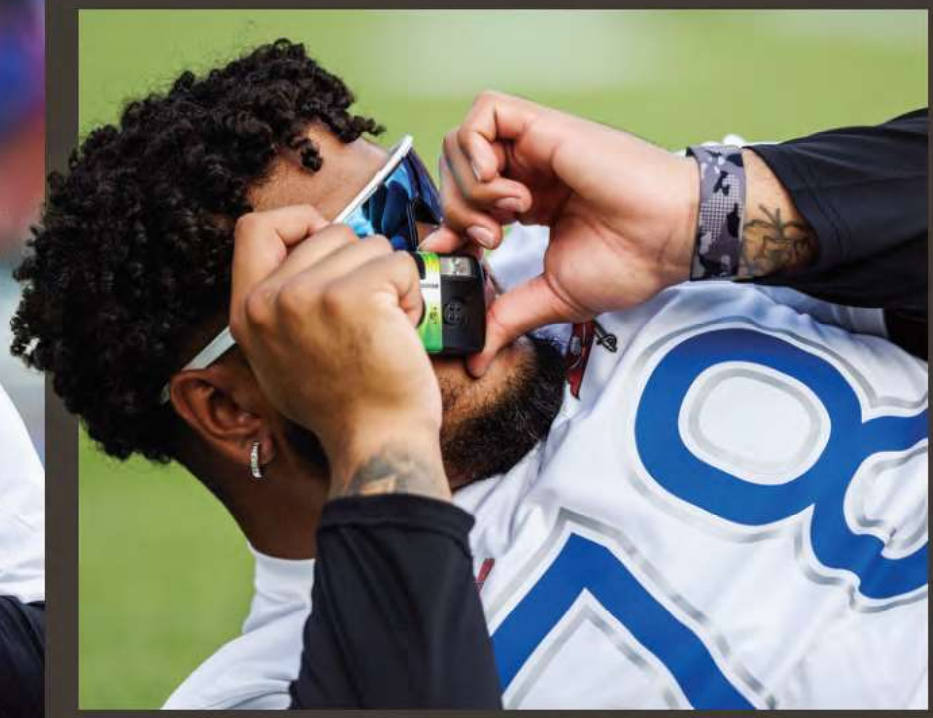




PLAYER ARRIVALS



PRO BOWL
GAMES



2024 PRO BOWL GAMES

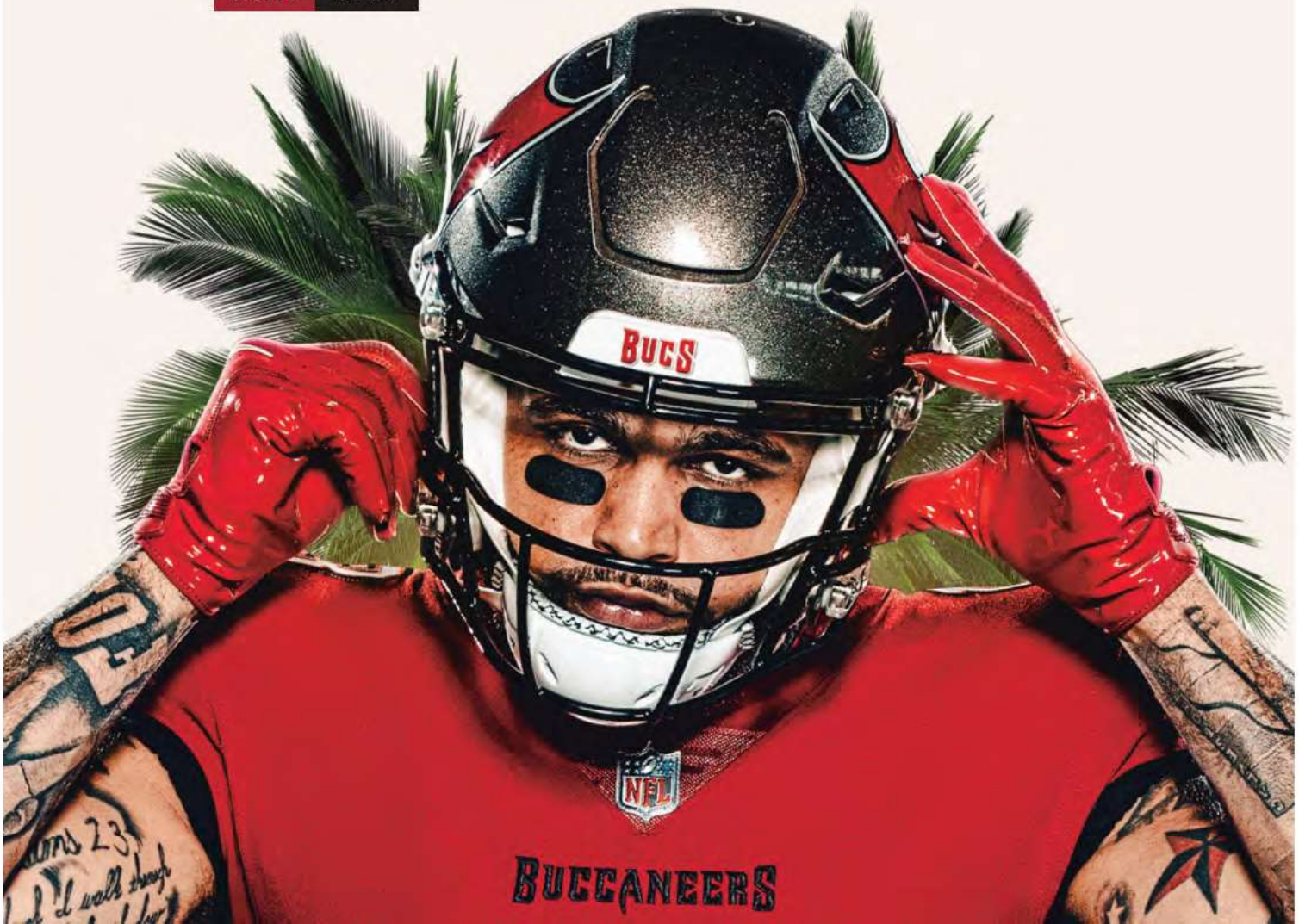
'24 SCHEDULE

PRESEASON

AUG 10 7:00 PM WTTA	AUG 17 7:30 PM WFLA	AUG 23 7:30 PM WFLA

SEP 08 4:25 PM FOX	SEP 15 1:00 PM FOX	SEP 22 1:00 PM FOX
SEP 29 1:00 PM FOX	OCT 03 8:15 PM PRIME VIDEO	OCT 13 1:00 PM FOX
OCT 21 8:15 PM ESPN	OCT 27 1:00 PM FOX	NOV 04 8:15 PM ESPN
NOV 10 1:00 PM FOX	BYE	NOV 24 1:00 PM CBS
DEC 01 4:05 PM FOX	DEC 08 1:00 PM CBS	DEC 15 4:25 PM FOX
DEC 22 8:20 PM NBC	DEC 29 1:00 PM CBS	TBA

HOME AWAY



JEFF BRIDGES
JOHN LITHGOW
AMY BRENNEMAN
ALIA SHAWKAT
FX
THE OLD MAN
9.12 FX
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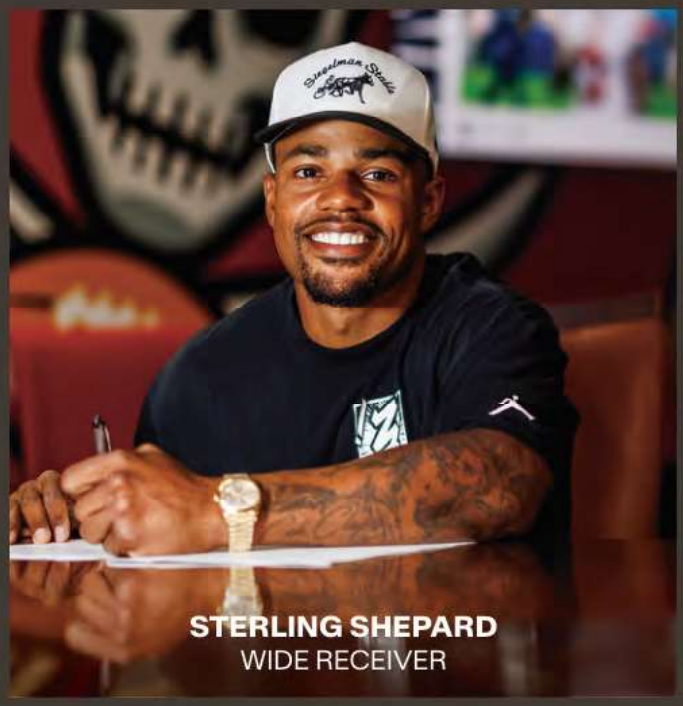
NEW FACES

JORDAN WHITEHEAD
SAFTEY



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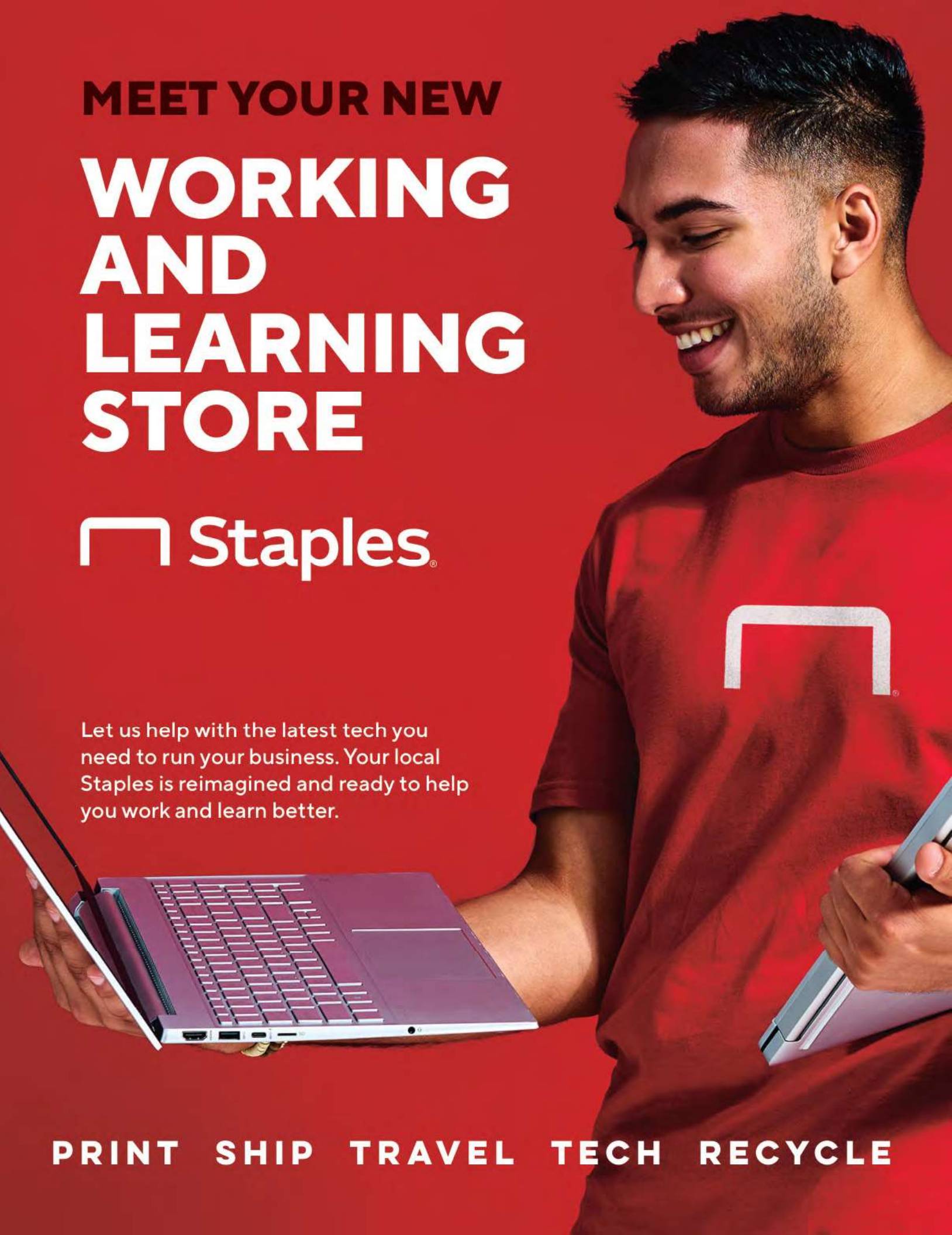

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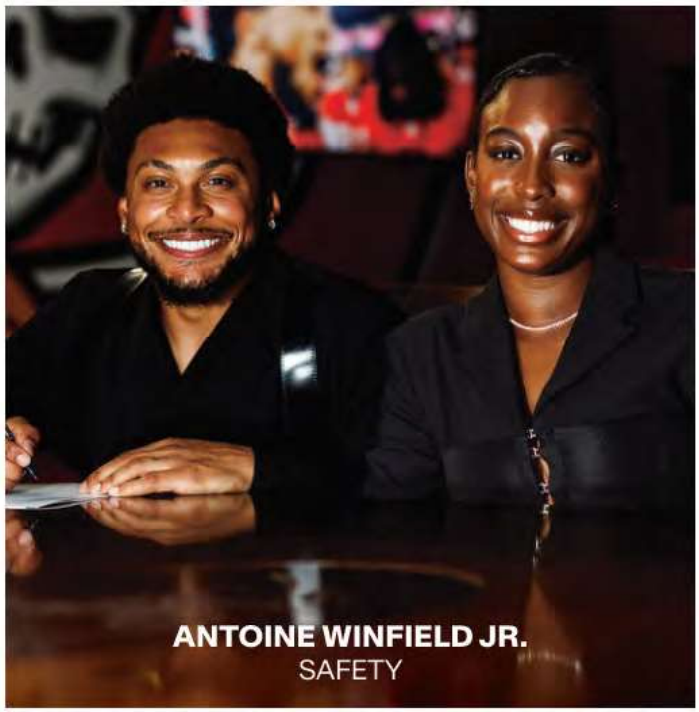
STAY WITH THE BAY

BAKER MAYFIELD
QUARTERBACK

MIKE EVANS
WIDE RECEIVER

TRISTAN WIRFS
TACKLE



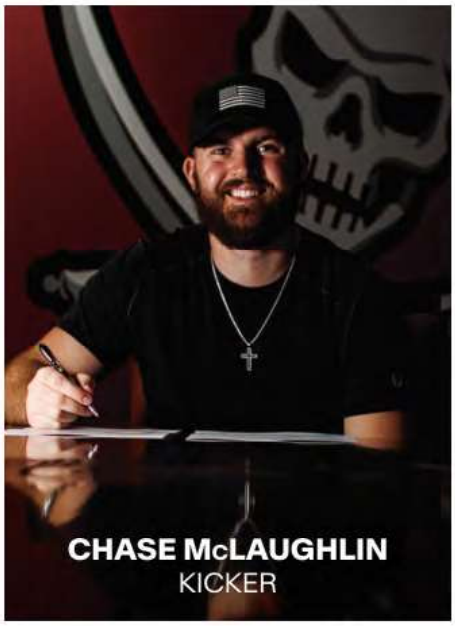
ANTOINE WINFIELD JR.
SAFETY

LAVONTE DAVID
LINEBACKER

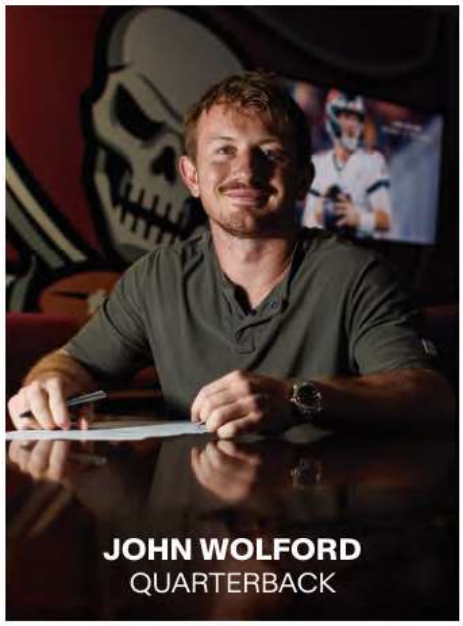
JUSTIN SKULE
TACKLE

WILL GHOLSTON
DEFENSIVE LINE

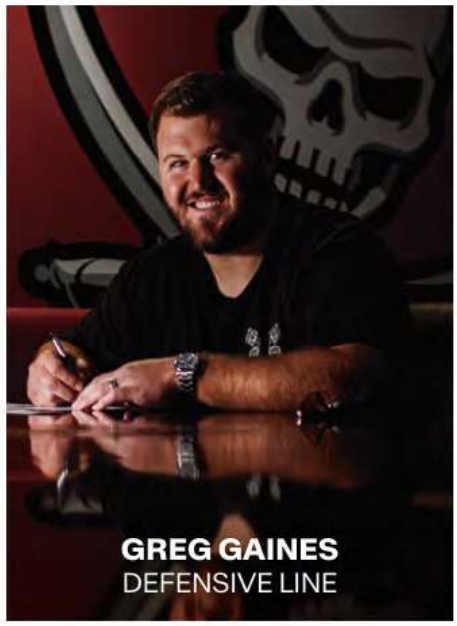
CHASE EDMONDS
RUNNING BACK



CHASE McLAUGHLIN
KICKER



JOHN WOLFORD
QUARTERBACK



GREG GAINES
DEFENSIVE LINE

OWNERSHIP

BRYAN GLAZER
OWNER/CO-CHAIRMAN

Owner/Co-Chairman Bryan Glazer enters his 30th year with the Buccaneers, working tirelessly to support the Buccaneers franchise and brand. Possessing an acute business sense, Glazer oversees many of the day-to-day operations of the club and has shaped the Buccaneers into one of the most recognizable and successful franchises in the National Football League. Over the past quarter-century, he has also evolved into one of Tampa Bay's top community leaders through his dedicated commitment to a variety of philanthropic endeavors.

The Glazer family's signing of six-time Super Bowl champion Tom Brady, along with the acquisition of other high-profile free agents during the 2020 offseason, set the stage for the franchise's historic run to its second world championship. The Buccaneers finished the regular season with an 11-5 record and posted a franchise-record eight-game winning streak which culminated with an appearance and eventual victory in Super Bowl LV.

On February 7, 2020, the Buccaneers defeated the Kansas City Chiefs 31-9 at Raymond James Stadium, earning the distinction as the first team in NFL history to win a Super Bowl in its home stadium. Under the Glazer family's leadership, the Buccaneers have totaled seven division titles, two conference championships, and are just the 14th NFL franchise to win multiple Super Bowls. In the nearly three decades since the family's purchase of the team in 1995, only three other ownership groups have claimed multiple Super Bowl victories. Prior to the Glazer family's ownership, the team advanced to the postseason just three times from 1976-94.

On January 26, 2003, in just their eighth year of ownership, the Glazer family was on hand in San Diego, California for the franchise's first world championship as Tampa Bay claimed its first NFL title with a 48-21 victory over Oakland in Super Bowl XXXVII. The Buccaneers, who were making their first appearance in the NFL's championship game, also claimed the first-ever NFC South title in 2002, then the fourth division crown in team history. In addition to the 1999 NFC Central Division title, Tampa Bay has also won the NFC South in 2005, 2007, 2021, 2022 and 2023.

An instrumental figure in his family's purchase of the Buccaneers in 1995, Glazer has been a driving force in improving every aspect of the club's influence, both nationally and in the Tampa Bay region.

His dedication to the Bay area was also highlighted by his leadership in the construction of Raymond James Stadium, which successfully hosted Super Bowl XXXV in 2001, Super Bowl XLIII in 2009, and Super Bowl LV in 2020. Glazer played an integral role in helping to lure the 2009 game to Tampa Bay, speaking to NFL owners on behalf of the team and the community at the NFL League meetings in May 2005. During the 2017 offseason, Glazer once again played a major part in positioning Tampa Bay as the top option to host Super Bowl LV in 2021, when it was decided that Los Angeles would not be able to meet the criteria for hosting the game due to stadium construction delays. Tampa Bay has hosted three Super Bowls since the family's purchase of the team and Glazer remains committed to pursuing future Super Bowls for the area. Glazer also serves on the NFL's Media Owned and Operated Committee, as appointed by NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell.

Prior to the 2022 season, Glazer played a pivotal role in the decision to name Todd Bowles as the team's new head coach following the retirement of Bruce Arians. Bowles has gone on to lead the Buccaneers to consecutive NFC South division titles, becoming the first head coach in franchise history to accomplish that feat.

Glazer's innovative approach to business and penchant for thinking outside the box has resulted in many new developments for the club, including the creation of the Pewter Partners program, which rewards the Buccaneers' corporate partners with superior advertising packages and unprecedented customer service.

Glazer has also distinguished himself as one of Tampa Bay's top philanthropists and, in the spring of 2016, was honored with induction into the Tampa Bay Business Hall of Fame in recognition of his business achievements and community leadership in and around the region.

In 2010, the Glazer Children's Museum opened in downtown Tampa thanks in large part to a $5 million donation from the Glazer Family Foundation. Glazer is on the Board of Directors for the award-winning museum which has served the children of Tampa Bay through educational programming. Glazer is also a member of the Moffitt Cancer Center National Board of Advisors and has served as chairman of the American Heart Association's annual Heart Ball.

He also serves as a Board Member for the Glazer Vision Foundation which has performed more than 200,000 free eye screenings and provided more than 20,000 free prescription eyeglasses to children in need.

Glazer has also played a large role in the redevelopment of West Tampa through a $4 million donation that led to the construction of the Shanna and Bryan Glazer JCC. The Center, which opened in December of 2016, has provided a wide array of community programming and serves as a key anchor for the area.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Glazer family provided 5 million meals through a donation to Feeding Tampa Bay, which was the largest single donation of meals to the program at the time. The family also pledged $100,000 to the One Tampa: Relief Now, Rise Together Fund and another $100,000 to the City of St. Petersburgh's Fighting Chance Fund.

In 2024, Shanna and Bryan Glazer donated $2 million to Berkeley Preparatory School's endowment for teachers in an effort to ensure the adequate compensation necessary to attract and retain high-quality teachers who foster a more effective learning environment.

Glazer also serves on the Board of Manchester United, which has captured five Premier League titles (2007, 2008, 2009, 2011 and 2013), as well as the 2008 Champions League title during his tenure.

Glazer earned his bachelor's degree in broadcast communications from American University in 1986, prior to completing his law degree from Whittier College School of Law in 1989. He resides in Tampa with his wife, Shanna, and their two children.

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OWNERSHIP

EDWARD GLAZER
OWNER/CO-CHAIRMAN

Entering his 30th season with the Buccaneers in 2024, Owner/Co-Chairman Edward Glazer actively oversees many aspects of the team's day-to-day business operations.

Glazer recognizes the critical importance of the fans to the team's success and has been instrumental in reinforcing Tampa Bay's commitment to its fan base and the unique experiences offered to Buccaneers Season Pass Members. He pioneered the NFL's first 12-month interest-free payment plan. Under his leadership, the Buccaneers ranked No. 1 in overall customer satisfaction again in 2023 among all 32 NFL clubs, marking the team's tenth top ranking in the last twelve years.

Glazer's commitment to the fans and the team's on-field success was evident during the 2020 offseason, which saw the Buccaneers make one of the most significant free-agent signings in NFL history with the acquisition of quarterback Tom Brady. This strategic move, coupled with several other key signings, culminated in the team's historic Super Bowl LV victory, making it the first NFL franchise to win a Super Bowl on its home field, at Raymond James Stadium on February 7, 2021. This secured the organization's second world championship under the Glazer family's leadership.

Under the nearly three decades of the Glazer family's stewardship, the Buccaneers have logged nine playoff appearances, seven division titles, two NFC Championships, and victories in Super Bowl XXXVII (2002) and Super Bowl LV (2020).

In addition to team achievements, Glazer led the design and launch of the Buccaneers' new uniforms unveiled before the 2020 season. The uniforms, which harken back to the franchise's most successful era, were developed based on extensive fan feedback. Glazer also led the design of an all-pewter alternate uniform along with the return of the throwback uniforms, which are a fan favorite, further connecting the team's storied history with its modern era.

Glazer was pivotal in the $160 million, multi-phase renovation of Raymond James Stadium, focusing on enhancing the game-day experience. These renovations included updates to the stadium's technology infrastructure, making the Buccaneers' in-stadium experience one of the best in the league. The project revamped all main level concession stands and incorporated over 31,000 square feet of new HD video boards, new ribbon boards, four HD tower video displays, and an all-new surround sound system. The premium areas saw a complete transformation, introducing two all-inclusive Hall of Fame Clubs and a newly reimagined West Stadium Club. Recent additions have included a new 10,000-square-foot retail store, the expansions and redesigns of both Hall of Fame clubs, and Bar 76, a full-service premium sports bar.

Furthermore, the Glazer family constructed a state-of-the-art indoor practice facility at the team's headquarters. This 100,000-square-foot facility features more than 3,000 seats for fans to enjoy training camp practices and special events.

Beyond the football field, the Glazer family has contributed significantly to the Tampa Bay area through various programs, grants, and donations. The Glazer Children's Museum, located downtown, has received high praise, including being named as one of the Top 10 children's museums in the country. During the spring of 2020, to assist during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Glazer family donated five million meals through Feeding Tampa Bay and pledged significant funds to local relief efforts.

Edward and his wife, Shari, through the Edward and Shari Glazer Charitable Trust, support various causes, including the Elton John AIDS Foundation, the Braille Institute, the Crohn's and Colitis Foundation, the Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art, and the "B.F.F. Bear Program" which provides teddy bears to pediatric patients in several hospitals.

In addition to his role with the Buccaneers, Glazer serves on the board of the family-owned Manchester United Soccer Club, the world's most popular sports team. He is also the founder and CEO of US Property Trust and US Auto Trust, holding extensive real estate and auto dealership investments across the United States.

A proud alumnus of Ithaca College, Glazer opened the Edward and Shari Glazer Arena on the school's campus.

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OWNERSHIP

JOEL GLAZER
OWNER/CO-CHAIRMAN

Owner/Co-Chairman Joel Glazer is entering his 30th season overseeing the day-to-day operations of the franchise, along with other members of the Glazer family.

After working alongside his father Malcolm to successfully acquire the Tampa Bay Buccaneers franchise in 1995, Glazer worked tirelessly in conjunction with his brother, Bryan, to build a community consensus for local approval of what would become Raymond James Stadium. The Glazers set out to design a stadium deemed worthy of a first-class organization, thereby creating a winning environment and revolutionizing fan experience and comfort.

Since assuming his current role with the club, the Buccaneers have made 11 playoff appearances, including a stretch from 1999-2002 in which Tampa Bay was the only team in the league to appear in the postseason all four years. Under the Glazer family's leadership, the Buccaneers have won seven division titles, two NFC Championships and two Super Bowls.

Prior to the 2020 season, Glazer helped engineer the boldest free agent signing in franchise history with the acquisition of six-time Super Bowl champion quarterback Tom Brady. The signing, along with the addition of a number of other key players, immediately transformed the Buccaneers into title contenders and set the stage for the team's historic victory in Super Bowl LV. When the Buccaneers defeated the Kansas City Chiefs 31-9 on February 7, 2021, at Raymond James Stadium, it marked the first time in NFL history that a team had won a Super Bowl on its home field. Previous to that, the franchise's other signature historical moment occurred at the conclusion of the 2002 season when Tampa Bay claimed its first NFL title with a 48-21 victory over the Oakland Raiders in Super Bowl XXXVII on January 26, 2003, in San Diego. The Buccaneers, who were making their first appearance in the NFL's championship game, also claimed the first-ever NFC South title in 2002, then the fourth division crown in team history. Tampa Bay also took the NFC South in 2005, 2007, 2021, 2022 and 2023.

On January 8, 2019, the Glazer family hired two-time Associated Press NFL Coach of the Year Bruce Arians as the team's head coach. During three memorable seasons at the helm in Tampa Bay, Arians finished his time with the Buccaneers as the franchise leader in winning percentage (.633) by a head coach, surpassing Tony Dungy. After Arians transitioned into a front office role, Glazer was then part of the decision-making process that elevated Todd Bowles from defensive coordinator to head coach ahead of the 2022 NFL season. During his three seasons as defensive coordinator for the Buccaneers (2019-21), Bowles' unit ranked third in the NFL in both takeaways and sacks, in addition to finishing top three in the NFL in rush defense in each of his three seasons. In his first two seasons as head coach, Bowles led the Buccaneers to consecutive NFC South division titles, becoming the first head coach to accomplish that feat in franchise history.

Glazer represents the franchise at all league meetings and is very active in a wide range of NFL matters. He currently serves as Chairman of the NFL International Committee, as well as being a member of the following other NFL committees: Finance Committee, Media Committee, NFL Management Council Executive Committee, and Legalized Sports Betting Committee.

Glazer also played an integral role in helping Tampa host be awarded and host Super Bowl XXXV in 2001, Super Bowl XLIII in 2009 and Super Bowl LV in 2021.

Glazer has been very active in the Tampa Bay community through the Glazer Family Foundation, which is dedicated to helping children in the Tampa Bay area through charity initiatives. The Foundation donated $5 million toward the construction of the Glazer Children's Museum, in downtown Tampa, which opened in 2010 and was named one of the Top Ten Family Museums in the country by Women's Day Magazine. For its wide-reaching charitable efforts, the Tampa Bay Sports Commission named the Glazer Family Foundation the Foundation of the Year at the inaugural Sneaker Soiree held in 2011.

Glazer also serves as Co-Chairman of Manchester United, which has captured five Premier League titles (2007, 2008, 2009, 2011 and 2013), one Champions League title (2008), four League Cups (2006, 2009, 2010, 2017), one FA Cup (2016), and one Europa League Championship (2017) during his tenure. His work with the club led to his naming as one of the Top 10 most influential Americans in the United Kingdom by The Telegraph.

Glazer earned his bachelor's degree in interdisciplinary studies from American University in 1989. The Rochester, New York, native is married to Angela, and the couple has two children.

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DARCIE GLAZER KASSEWITZ

OWNER/CO-CHAIRMAN, PRESIDENT - TAMPA BAY BUCCANEERS FOUNDATION AND GLAZER VISION FOUNDATION

Darcie Glazer Kassewitz has been a driving force behind the Tampa Bay Buccaneers' commitment to innovative, forward-thinking fan engagement. Her leadership has helped position the Tampa Bay Buccaneers to be recognized at the forefront of creating opportunities for female fans and advancing social justice through strategic programming across Tampa Bay and nationally.

Through her dedication to innovative programming, Kassewitz helped establish the Social Justice Initiative in 2018 alongside Buccaneers coaches, scouts and staff focusing on youth empowerment, police relations, criminal justice reform, racial equality, and workforce development. The initiative is funded by the Tampa Bay Buccaneers Foundation Social Justice Fund, created by the Glazer family to match players charitable donations and invest millions to charitable organizations throughout the region.

In 2024, Kassewitz spearheaded the launch of the Tampa Bay Buccaneers National Coaching Academy to create new pathways and entry points for coaches seeking their first opportunity to work in the NFL. The ambitious and pioneering academy is held at the Buccaneers training facility and delivers an intensive, comprehensive curriculum and participation in the team's rookie minicamp for coaching candidates seeking their first entry into the NFL. Thousands of applications were submitted and reviewed by Buccaneers coaches and staff and 25 finalists were awarded a full scholarship to cover costs in Tampa. Upon completion of the team's rookie minicamp, the coaching and front office staff will select five finalists in its inaugural year to transition into the Bill Walsh Diversity Coaching Fellowship and work alongside Buccaneers coaches, scouts and staff during training camp and preseason.

Aligned with the core belief that "Football is for All", Kassewitz has implemented groundbreaking initiatives to strengthen the Buccaneers' connection with all segments of their fan base and has helped position the Buccaneers as leaders across the NFL in diversity and inclusivity. In 2015, she introduced Women of Red, a pioneering program focused on enhancing the fan experience for women. Women of Red was deemed "the tipping point for a genuine connection to fans" attracting thousands of women to a variety of interactive experiences, including exclusive behind-the-scenes access and opportunities to interact with players, legends, and current executives.

Under her stewardship, the Buccaneers have introduced many first-of-its-kind women's and girls' programming, including the Women's Summit for Careers in Football, the Girls in Football Collegiate Scholarship and pioneered the Buccaneers Girls Flag Football Preseason Classic, the largest girls flag football tournament in the nation. This annual multi-day event grew to 109 teams and 2,100 athletes in 2024, which remains the largest in the country. To highlight these talented athletes in the Tampa Bay area, the team launched @BuccaneersFlag, the Instagram handle dedicated to showcase all things flag football.

In support of the Glazer family's long-standing commitment to education and children in the Tampa Bay community, the Glazer Family Foundation provided a lead gift to open the world-class Glazer Children's Museum in downtown Tampa as part of its ongoing dedication to children. This one-of-a-kind museum opened on September 25, 2010, and instantly became the featured destination for children and families in Tampa Bay. In 2020, the Glazer family donated an additional lead gift to create the Glazer Family Playground at the St. Petersburg Pier, a 26-acre St. Pete Pier District that has become a destination amenity for thousands of children and families.

To advance the Buccaneers support of education, the single-largest in-school program in team history was launched through the Jr. Bucs School Program impacting nearly 200,000 students in 300 elementary and middle schools across the Tampa Bay Area. In 2024, the Tampa Bay Buccaneers Foundation expanded their partnership with Hillsborough County Public Schools with funding to support the installation of 135 outdoor shade covers and covered courts at all elementary schools in the region. To further support education, more than 24,000 children have received tickets to Raymond James Stadium through the Buccaneers Game-day for Education program to reward children for their academic achievement.

Kassewitz also leads the Glazer Vision Foundation, focusing on full-treatment vision correction for children in Tampa Bay. For over a decade, the Foundation provides eye exams and prescription glasses to underserved children in need using the Mobile Vision Clinic. Since its inception, the program has performed more than 200,000 free eye screenings and provided more than 20,000 free prescription eyeglasses to children and families. In addition to ocular health, The Glazer family provides programs, resources and financial support that help ensure all families can call Tampa Bay home through affordable housing efforts, combatting food insecurity and closing disparities in education. Through a multi-million-dollar gift to the AdventHealth Foundation, the family is also improving healthcare in Tampa Bay.

Kassewitz has also had a strong influence on the design and aesthetic of many of the signature spaces enjoyed by Buccaneers fans and players at the team's business headquarters and training facility. In partnership with her brothers, she helped spearhead the design of the AdventHealth Training Center which features in-depth exhibits that tell the story of the franchise, including the team's two Lombardi trophies as well as an original sculpture titled "The Moment of Victory" which depicts the moment the team won its first World Championship in Super Bowl XXXVII. Additionally, she was instrumental in the planning and design of the Buccaneers' 100,000-square-foot indoor practice facility which debuted in 2018.

Darcie Glazer Kassewitz serves on the NFLs Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee and is a member of the Board of Trustees of the Women's Sports Foundation, a national non-profit organization established in 1974 by Billie Jean King that has invested over $100 million to expand access and opportunities for girls and women in sports. She has also served as Co-Chairwoman of the Make-A-Wish Foundation.

Kassewitz serves on the Board of the Manchester United Soccer Club, which has captured six titles since the Glazer family took over the club: five Premier League titles (2007, 2008, 2009 and 2011 and 2013), as well as the 2008 Champions League title.

Kassewitz graduated cum laude with a Bachelor of Science in Psychology from American University in 1990 and earned her Juris Doctorate from Suffolk Law School in 1993. Kassewitz and her husband, Joel, reside in Tampa.

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FOOTBALL ADMINISTRATION

JASON LICHT
GENERAL MANAGER

Jason Licht was named the fifth general manager in franchise history on January 21, 2014. Licht owns more than two decades of scouting and player personnel experience with six organizations. In 28 NFL seasons, including one as a coach, the clubs that Licht has worked for have amassed a 240-214 (.529) record, 13 playoff appearances, 11 division championships, five conference championships and two Super Bowl titles.

Since Licht took over the general manager role in Tampa Bay in 2014, the Buccaneers lead the NFL in most snaps played (114,185) and most games started (1,598) by a team's own first through fifth round draft picks during that span, exhibiting his sustained success through the NFL Draft over his tenure. Additionally, 28 of the 33 different players who started a game for Tampa Bay in 2023 were homegrown players. Since 2020 alone, the Buccaneers lead all NFC teams in total wins (47) and are the only team in the conference to reach the playoffs in each of the past four seasons, winning three consecutive NFC South division titles during that stretch.

In 2024, Licht locked in key 2023 free agent acquisition, quarterback Baker Mayfield, to a long-term contract extension following a season in which Mayfield was named to his first Pro Bowl and earned the PFWA Most Improved Player award. He was 1-of-2 players with 28+ passing touchdowns and 10-or-fewer interceptions in 2023, leading the Buccaneers to an NFC South division title and a spot in the NFC Divisional Round. Mayfield joined Tom Brady as the only players in team history to throw for 4,000+ yards, 25+ touchdowns and 10-or-fewer interceptions in a single season and capped off his first year with the Buccaneers by recording back-to-back postseason games with 300+ passing yards and three touchdowns. In addition to stabilizing the quarterback position, Licht re-signed franchise cornerstones linebacker Lavonte David, wide receiver Mike Evans and safety Antoine Winfield Jr., while bringing back fourth-round success story in safety Jordan Whitehead, who Licht originally drafted in 2018 and who became a starter on Tampa Bay's Super Bowl LV championship team.

With their performances during the 2023 season, Licht's 2014 and 2020 first-round draft picks – Evans and Wirfs – each earned Pro Bowl selections in 2023, in addition to 2020 second-round selection, Winfield Jr., earning AP first-team All-Pro accolades and Evans earning second-team All-Pro recognition. Evans notched his 10th consecutive season with 1,000 yards receiving and tied for the league lead in touchdown receptions (13). Winfield Jr. held a share of the league lead in both forced fumbles (six) and fumble recoveries (four), and became the first player since data became available in 1999 with 100+ tackles, three-plus interceptions, three-plus forced fumbles, three-plus fumble recoveries and 3.0+ sacks in a single season.

Throughout the 2023 offseason, Licht was tasked with navigating a complicated salary cap situation and finding a successor to Tom Brady following the quarterback's retirement, all while retooling a roster in search of its third consecutive NFC South division title. Through a series of extensions for inside linebacker Lavonte David, cornerback Jamel Dean and outside linebacker Anthony Nelson, plus value free agent signings in quarterback Baker Mayfield, running back Chase Edmonds, defensive lineman Greg Gaines and kicker Chase McLaughlin, Licht was able to successfully address team needs while abiding by league cap restrictions. McLaughlin was named first-team All-Pro by Pro Football Focus after setting a new single-season franchise record for field goal percentage (93.5%), converting 29-of-31 field goal opportunities in 2023.

The team's 2023 draft class produced seven players who played at least 13 games for Tampa Bay during their rookie season, providing the most total snaps by a 2023 NFL rookie class (5,560). First-round defensive lineman Calijah Kancey and third-round outside linebacker Yaya Diaby combined for 59 pressures, 22 tackles for loss, 20 quarterback hits and 11.5 sacks. Diaby led all rookies in tackles for loss in 2023, with 12, and tied for first in fumble recoveries (two), in addition to leading the Buccaneers in sacks. Meanwhile, Kancey was named the NFL Defensive Rookie of the Month for November, finishing his rookie campaign tied for second among rookies in tackles for loss (10), tied for fourth in quarterback hits (12) and sixth in quarterback pressures (33). Second-round guard Cody Mauch started all 17 games for Tampa Bay in his rookie season, while sixth-round cornerback Josh Hayes led all NFL players in special teams tackles in 2023 (14).

Tampa Bay's 2022 season saw the Buccaneers earn their second consecutive NFC South division title, marking the first time in franchise history that the organization garnered back-to-back division championships. The 2022 campaign signaled the final season of Tom Brady's career, concluding a three-year span with Tampa Bay that saw him lead the Buccaneers to 32 regular season wins, five postseason wins, two division titles and one Super Bowl Championship after he was signed by Licht as a free agent during the 2020 offseason. Brady finished his time in Tampa Bay as the organization's all-time leader in passer rating (98.1) and completion percentage (66.7%), while ranking second in passing touchdowns (108), pass completions (1,376) and yards per attempt (7.10), and third in pass attempts (2,062) and passing yards (14,643). The 2022 season also saw 2020 draftee Tristan Wirfs named to his second Pro Bowl, while garnering second-team All-Pro honors.

Licht navigated the 2022 offseason swiftly despite the retirement announcement of two offensive mainstays in tight end Rob Gronkowski and guard Ali Marpet. The first move came in March when the Buccaneers announced a trade with the New England Patriots for guard Shaq Mason. Following the trade came several re-signings of foundational pieces Licht either drafted or acquired through free agency. Pro Bowl center Ryan Jensen was the first to re-sign with the team, followed by cornerback Carlton Davis III and running back Leonard Fournette. Licht also secured one of the league's best wide receivers when he reached a multi-year extension with his 2017 third-round pick Chris Godwin.

In 2021, quarterback Tom Brady helped lead the Buccaneers to a 13-4 record while recording the best statistical season of his 22-year career, leading the league in both yards (5,316) and touchdowns (43). Brady was protected by three Pro Bowlers in center Ryan Jensen, guard Ali Marpet, and tackle Tristan Wirfs. The trio combined for 3,369 snaps and only allowed five sacks. Adding to the No. 1-ranked passing offense, Mike Evans set a career-high in touchdown catches (14), finishing second in the NFL. Evans' historic year was highlighted by an eighth consecutive 1,000-yard receiving season and his fourth Pro Bowl selection.

Defensively, Licht constructed a unit with Pro Bowlers at every level, with Shaquil Barrett receiving his second selection as a Buccaneer and Vita Vea, Devin White, and Antoine Winfield Jr. all receiving their first honor. In his third season, White led the team in total tackles (128) and tied for 10th in the NFL in solo tackles (87). Winfield Jr. led the league in fumble recoveries with three. Before wrapping up the regular season, Licht signed Vea to a contract extension, rewarding the nose tackle who bolstered the Buccaneers run defense to a top-three finish in three consecutive seasons from 2019-21.

During the 2021 offseason, Licht led the effort to retain all 22 starters from the Buccaneers' Super Bowl LV championship team, the first reigning champion to accomplish this feat in the salary cap era. This led to a franchise-record 13 regular-season wins and two home playoff games, including a Divisional Round appearance. Nine of those 22 starters were named to the Pro Bowl, tying a franchise record.

In 2020, the Tampa Bay Buccaneers defeated the Kansas City Chiefs, 31-9, at Raymond James Stadium in Super Bowl LV. Twelve of Tampa Bay's 22 starters in the Super Bowl were drafted by Licht, including all five members of the team's starting defensive backfield. All but two of the players on the team's championship roster were acquired by Licht. Brady, the game's most valuable player, was the most notable of many key acquisitions Licht made last offseason, propelling the Buccaneers to the second championship in franchise history.

In the 2020 regular season, Brady helped guide the team to an 11-5 record, while setting the franchise single-season record for touchdown passes, with 40. Brady also oversaw an offense that established franchise records for points scored (492) and total touchdowns (59).

Of the team's 14 postseason touchdowns, nine were scored by players acquired by Licht during the 2019 offseason, including all four touchdowns scored in Super Bowl LV. On the defensive side of the ball, outside linebackers Shaquil Barrett and Jason Pierre-Paul formed one of the league's most dominant pass-rushing duos, combining for the second-most sacks (45.5) by any NFL teammates from 2019-20.

Entering the 2020 season, Licht was able to make significant changes to the roster, despite offseason challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. Licht spearheaded the Buccaneers' first-ever virtual draft by selecting seven players, including offensive tackle Tristan Wirfs at No. 13 overall. Wirfs was selected to the PFWA All-Rookie Team in 2020 alongside second-round pick Antoine Winfield Jr. The Buccaneers were the only team in the NFL to have multiple draft picks selected to the All-Rookie Team in consecutive seasons from 2019-20. Licht was able to keep the defensive front seven together by placing the franchise tag on outside linebacker Shaquil Barrett and re-signing defensive tackle Ndamukong Suh and outside linebacker Jason Pierre-Paul. Pierre-Paul went on to earn a Pro Bowl selection in 2020. The most significant change came in March after signing six-time Super Bowl-winning quarterback Tom Brady in free agency and conducting a trade with New England to bring five-time Pro Bowl tight end Rob Gronkowski out of retirement. The 2020 season saw Evans – Licht's first ever draft selection as general manager – become the first player in NFL history to record 1,000+ receiving yards in each of their first seven seasons.

FOOTBALL ADMINISTRATION

In 2019, Evans' fellow receiver Chris Godwin posted his first career 1,000-yard season and earned AP's second-team All-Pro honors. That season, the duo became the first pair of receiver teammates voted to the Pro Bowl since Arizona's Larry Fitzgerald and Anquan Boldin in 2009.

On the defensive side of the ball in 2019, outside linebacker Shaquil Barrett was named second team All-Pro and earned a Pro Bowl selection after setting a franchise record for single-season sacks with 19.5. Linebacker Devin White – the fifth overall pick in the 2019 NFL draft – was named Defensive Rookie of the Month in both November and December, in addition to making the PFWA All-Rookie Team alongside cornerback Sean Murphy-Bunting. Rookie cornerback Jamel Dean recorded 17 passes defensed, tied for the fourth-most in the NFL, while second-year cornerback Carlton Davis recorded 19 passes defensed, the second-most in the NFL.

During the 2019 offseason, Licht made a handful of changes to the team's defense, most notably adding free agent defensive lineman Ndamukong Suh, a five-time All-Pro and Pro Bowl selection. Suh – alongside 2018 first-round draft pick Vita Vea – helped anchor a Buccaneers defensive line that held opponents to the fewest rushing yards per game in 2019 (73.8 rush yards allowed per game). Licht also brought in outside linebacker Shaquil Barrett while spending the team's first five draft picks on the defensive side of the ball, including linebacker Devin White, selected with the fifth overall pick.

In 2019 offseason, Licht signed left tackle Donovan Smith to a contract extension, after having done the same with left guard Ali Marpet during the 2018 season. Marpet (61st overall) and Smith (34th overall) entered the league as second-round picks in the 2015 NFL Draft and went on to start 101 and 124 games, respectively for the Buccaneers in their careers.

In 2018, Mike Evans ranked third in the NFL in receiving yards and set a franchise single season record (1,524) one the way to earning his second career Pro Bowl selection. Prior to the 2018 season, Evans was rewarded with a contract extension.

In the 2018 offseason, Licht transformed the team's defensive line with the addition of Jason Pierre-Paul, Carl Nassib and Vita Vea. Pierre-Paul went on to lead the team in sacks with 12.5 – then the most by any Buccaneers player since 2005 (Simeon Rice, 14.0). Acquired through waivers from Cleveland, Nassib finished the season ranked second on the team in sacks, with 6.5. Five players from Licht's 2018 draft class were primary starters during the team's 2020 Super Bowl LV Championship season, including Vea (first round), cornerback Carlton Davis III (second round), running back Ronald Jones II (second round), guad Alex Cappa (third round) and safety Jordan Whitehead (fourth round).

In the 2017 NFL Draft, Licht selected three players who stepped into starting roles as rookies. The Buccaneers first-round pick, tight end O.J. Howard, started all 14 games he played in, tying for the team lead with six touchdown receptions – tied for the second-most among NFL rookies and the fourth-most ever by a Buccaneers rookie. The Buccaneers also got contributions from wide receiver Chris Godwin, who capped off his rookie season by earning NFC Offensive Player of the Week honors in Week 17 before becoming a full-time starter in 2018 and having putting forth his breakout season in 2019.

The Buccaneers finished the 2016 season at 9-7. Mike Evans earned his first career Pro Bowl selection after finishing the year with 96 catches for 1,321 yards and 12 touchdowns. His 12 touchdown catches tied his own franchise record (set in 2014) and were tied for the second-most in the NFL in 2016. His 96 catches were then the second-most in Buccaneers history and the sixth-most in the league that season, while his 1,321 yards were then the third-most ever by a Buccaneers player and ranked fourth in the NFL.

Another major contributor to the team's offense in 2016 was tight end Cameron Brate, who originally joined the team as a college free agent out of Harvard in 2014. Brate became an integral part of the Buccaneers offense over the course of his career, finishing with 273 receptions for 2,857 yards and 33 touchdowns in 126 games played for Tampa Bay. His 33 career touchdown receptions stand as the fourth-most in franchise history.

In 2015, Licht drafted quarterback Jameis Winston with the No. 1 overall pick. During Winston's five seasons with the team, he set franchise records for pass attempts (2,548), completions (1,563), passing yards (19,737) and passing touchdowns (121).

Licht joined the Buccaneers in 2014, on the heels of two seasons with Arizona as the vice president of player personnel, working under general manager Steve Keim, who earned NFL Executive of the Year honors from both Pro Football Talk and Sporting News. Licht's first draft pick with Tampa Bay, wide receiver Mike Evans, was selected seventh overall in the 2014 NFL Draft and went on to have a stellar rookie season, finishing with 68 receptions for 1,051 yards and 12 touchdowns and being named to the PFWA, NFL.com, ESPN.com and SI.com All-Rookie Teams.

Licht first worked for the Cardinals in 2008 as a personnel executive, before leaving to spend three seasons as director of pro personnel with New England. He returned to Arizona in 2012 as director of player personnel before being promoted to the vice president position.

In addition, Licht's career has intersected with some of the NFL's greatest head coaches, including Don Shula, Jimmy Johnson, Bill Belichick and Andy Reid. In all, Licht has worked alongside seven head coaches who have led a team to a Super Bowl (Shula, Johnson, Belichick, Reid, Bruce Arians, Pete Carroll, Lovie Smith, Ken Whisenhunt) and seven who have won AP Coach of the Year honors in their careers (Shula, Johnson, Belichick, Reid, Smith, Arians and Dom Capers).

While with Arizona, Licht worked directly with the head coach and general manager on player acquisition and contract negotiations, as well as leading the club's scouting efforts as he oversaw both the college and pro scouting departments. The 2013 season saw the Cardinals improve to 10-6 from a 5-11 campaign the previous year.

In 2008 Arizona won the NFC West and advanced to the Super Bowl. Licht then spent three seasons (2009-11) as director of pro personnel with the New England Patriots, where he was responsible for monitoring every NFL roster with an emphasis on scouting talent of upcoming pro free agents, while also maintaining depth on New England's roster. The Patriots were AFC East champions in each of those three seasons and advanced to the Super Bowl following the 2011 campaign.

Licht spent five years with the Philadelphia Eagles (2003-07), first serving as the club's assistant director of player personnel before being promoted to vice president of player personnel for his final two seasons. The team won three NFC East titles during that span and earned a berth in Super Bowl XXXIX.

Prior to joining Philadelphia, Licht enjoyed his first stint in New England, serving as a scout and assistant director of player personnel from 1999-2002, a stretch that included a victory in Super Bowl XXXVI. He was part of a front office that drafted core pieces of the team that won three Super Bowls in four seasons, such as Damien Woody, Kevin Faulk, Tom Brady, Richard Seymour, Matt Light, and Deion Branch.

Licht began his NFL career with the Miami Dolphins in 1995, where he worked as a scouting department assistant before spending the 1996 season as an offensive assistant/quality control coach. In 1997, he worked for National Football Scouting, a college football scouting service, before joining the Carolina Panthers' scouting staff in 1998.

Licht played linebacker and guard at the University of Nebraska from 1989-91 before transferring to Nebraska-Wesleyan, where he was an all-conference defensive tackle. He and his wife, Blair, have three children: Charlie, Zoe and Theo.

FOOTBALL ADMINISTRATION

BRUCE ARIANS
Senior Advisor to the General Manager

MIKE BIEHL
Director of Player Personnel

SEAN CONLEY
Assistant Director of Pro Scouting

DONOVAN COTTON
Assistant Director of Pro Scouting

JACKIE DAVIDSON
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SPENCER DILLE
Senior Director of Football Technology

MIKE GREENBERG
Assistant General Manager

TONY HARDIE
Assistant Director of College Scouting

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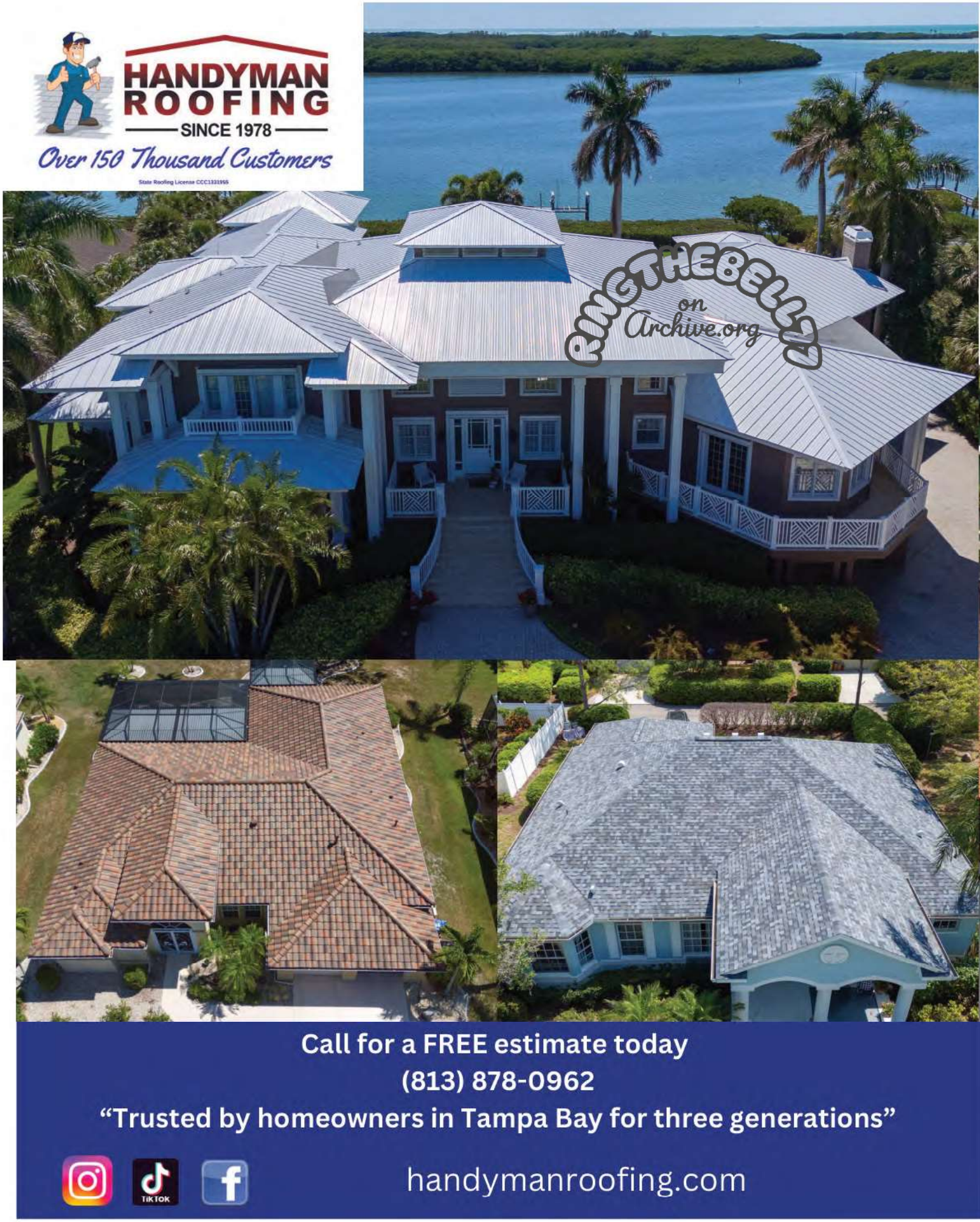
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TODD BOWLES
HEAD COACH

Todd Bowles enters his third season as head coach of the Tampa Bay Buccaneers following his three seasons as the team's defensive coordinator (2019-21).

Over his first two seasons, Bowles accomplished a feat that no one else has through their first two years as Buccaneers head coach, leading the team to consecutive playoff appearances and consecutive NFC South division titles.

Since joining the Buccaneers in 2019, Bowles' defenses have set the standard for rush defense, leading the league in both fewest rushing yards per game allowed (93.0) and fewest rush yards per attempt allowed (3.9), while limiting opponents to the fourth-fewest rushing touchdowns (55). He has led an opportunistic defense that ranks first in opponent fumble recoveries (59), first in strip sacks (41), first in quarterback hits (535), second in sacks (235), second in forced fumbles (82), second in tackles for loss (439), third in goal-to-go efficiency (66.9%), fifth in takeaways (128), fifth in red zone efficiency (53.7%), sixth in fewest yards per play allowed (5.2), eighth in fewest net passing yards allowed per attempt (6.4), tied for eighth in defensive touchdowns (11), ninth in fewest yards per game allowed (334.2), ninth in passes defensed (360) and 10th in lowest third-down conversion rate against (38.1%).

In his five seasons with Tampa Bay, Bowles has coached eight different Buccaneers to Pro Bowl selections as either defensive coordinator or head coach: Shaquil Barrett (2019, 2021), Mike Evans (2023), Baker Mayfield (2023), Jason Pierre-Paul (2020), Vita Vea (2021), Devin White (2021), Antoine Winfield Jr. (2021) and Tristan Wirfs (2022, 2023).

In 2023, Bowles guided the NFL's eighth-youngest roster to an appearance in the NFC Divisional round, earning his first career playoff win as a head coach in a commanding 32-9 victory over the Philadelphia Eagles in the Super Wild Card Round. He inspired a 5-1 finish in the final six weeks of the regular season to secure Tampa Bay's spot in the playoffs.

A former defensive back himself, Bowles oversaw a breakout season for safety Antoine Winfield Jr. in 2023, earning him first-team All-Pro recognition from the Associated Press and Pro Football Focus. Since data is available dating back to 1999, Winfield Jr. is the lone player with 100+ tackles, three-or-more interceptions, three-or-more forced fumbles, three-or-more fumble recoveries and 3.0+ sacks in a single season. The defense as a whole finished top five in run defense for the fourth time in five seasons under Bowles and ranked seventh in scoring defense, limiting opponents to just 19.1 points per game in 2023.

On the offensive side of the ball, newly-signed quarterback Baker Mayfield had the best season of his NFL career, earning the 2023 Pro Football Writers of America Most Improved Player award and Pro Bowl honors after setting career highs in completions (364), completion percentage (63.4%), passing yards (4,044) and passing touchdowns (28). Mike Evans earned his fifth career Pro Bowl nod and continued his run as the NFL's most consistent receiver, recording his 10th consecutive season with 1,000+ receiving yards – the longest-such streak to begin a career and the second-longest streak overall in NFL history. Despite shifting from right tackle to left tackle, Tristan Wirfs earned his third Pro Bowl selection in just his fourth year in the NFL becoming just the second offensive lineman in franchise history with three consecutive Pro Bowl trips.

In 2022, Bowles led the Buccaneers to the NFC South title in his first year as the head coach in Tampa Bay, joining Jon Gruden as the only coaches in franchise history to accomplish that feat in year one. He was the play caller for a defense that finished top 10 in the NFL in total yards per game (324.3 opponent yards/game), yards per play (5.14 avg.), pass defense (203.5 passing yards allowed/game), net yards per attempt (6.1), sacks (45.0) and tackles for loss (89), while limiting opponents to the fifth-fewest first downs per game (18.5) and the sixth-lowest third down conversion percentage (36.9 percent).

On the other side of the ball, Tristan Wirfs made his second Pro Bowl as part of an offensive line unit that led the league in fewest sacks allowed/pass attempt (2.8%). In addition, Tampa Bay ranked second in the NFL in passing offense (279.8 yards/game) and boasted a pair of 1,000-yard receivers in Mike Evans and Chris Godwin. Godwin finished eighth in the NFL with his 104 receptions – the second-most in a single season in Buccaneers franchise history.

In his three seasons as defensive coordinator from 2019-2021, he transformed the unit into one of the most productive defenses in the NFL. Tampa Bay ranked third in the league in takeaways (82) and third in sacks (142), joining the Pittsburgh Steelers as the only teams to place in the top five of both categories. In addition to the sacks and takeaways under Bowles' guidance as defensive coordinator, the Buccaneers ranked first in rushing yards allowed per game (82.5), first in rushing yards per attempt (3.72), first in quarterback hits (352), first in defensive fumble recoveries (37), first in passes defensed (241), second in strip sacks (26), third in tackles for loss (262), fourth in forced fumbles (52), tied for fourth in defensive touchdowns (nine), fifth in fewest yards per play allowed (5.13), fifth in passing yards per attempt allowed (6.78), sixth in red zone defense efficiency (54.7%), seventh in lowest third-down conversion rate allowed (37.6%), ninth in total defense (334.1 yards allowed per game) and ninth in goal-to-go efficiency (68.6%).

From 2020-21, the Buccaneers allowed the sixth-fewest points per game (21.5) and the fifth-fewest yards per game (329.4). In six postseason contests during that span, Tampa Bay tallied 16 takeaways – seven more than any other team. Bowles was the architect behind a historic defensive performance that catapulted the Buccaneers to a Super Bowl LV victory. His unit held the explosive Kansas City Chiefs' offense to nine points and without a touchdown for the first time in 54 games with Patrick Mahomes as the starting quarterback.

In 2021 alone, Bowles led a defense that finished first in the NFL in quarterback hits (123), third in rush defense (92.5 ypg), fifth in fewest points per game allowed (20.8), tied for fifth in takeaways (29), seventh in sacks (47.0), seventh in fewest yards per play allowed (5.16), eighth in tackles for loss (81), tied for eighth in interceptions (17) and tied for eighth in forced fumbles (16). Four Buccaneers defensive players earned Pro Bowl honors in 2021: outside linebacker Shaquil Barrett, nose tackle Vita Vea, linebacker Devin White and safety Antoine Winfield Jr. – the most in a single season on the defensive side of the ball since 2002.

In Tampa Bay's championship season in 2020, Bowles directed a defense that led the NFL in quarterback hits (142), tackles for loss (107) and takeaways (34), while tying for the league lead in sacks (58.0) between the regular season and postseason combined. During the regular season alone, the Buccaneers' defense ranked first in rushing yards allowed per game (80.6), tied for second in quarterback hits (116), tied for second in tackles for loss (91), tied for fourth in sacks (48.0), sixth in total yards allowed per game (327.1) and eighth in points allowed per game (22.2). Additionally, the Buccaneers defense allowed the fifth-fewest first downs (19.9) and tallied the seventh-most sacks per pass attempt (7.78%).

In just his first two seasons, Bowles helped elevate a Buccaneers defense that ranked 27th in the NFL in yards per game allowed prior to his arrival to a team that finished sixth in that category in 2020. In the Super Bowl, Tampa Bay held the Kansas City Chiefs to just nine points – keeping a team that ranked sixth during the regular season in touchdowns out of the end zone. The nine points given up by the Buccaneers tied for the 10th-fewest in Super Bowl history.

Bowles helped mentor Winfield Jr. into PFWA All-Rookie team honors in 2020 and coached outside linebacker Jason Pierre-Paul to his third career Pro Bowl selection.

In his first season in Tampa Bay in 2019, Bowles quickly put an emphasis on stopping the run as he transformed the Buccaneers from the 24th-ranked run defense in 2018 (123.9 rush yards allowed per game) to the top run defense in the NFL in 2019, holding opponents to just 73.8 rushing yards per game and just 3.26 average yards per rush. The 1,181 rushing yards allowed by Tampa Bay in 2019 were the 11th-fewest all-time in a 16-game season. The front seven showed a knack for getting into the opposing backfield, tying for fifth in the NFL in tackles for loss.

The Buccaneers also led the NFL with 96 passes defensed in 2019, tied for the league lead with six defensive touchdowns, ranked third with 21 forced fumbles and finished fifth with 28 takeaways.

In the secondary, Bowles guided a group of predominantly first and second-year players to a notable second-half turnaround in which the defense reduced its passing yards allowed per game from 293.5 in Games 1-8 to 246.8 in Games 9-16, while lowering its total yards allowed per game mark from 371.6 to 316.3 in that same span. The 316.3 total yards allowed per game was the sixth-best mark of any defense over its final eight games of the season.

Bowles' 2019 defense featured three players who took home end-of-season

honors, led by Pro Bowl and AP second-team All-Pro outside linebacker Shaquil Barrett. Barrett set a team record with his league-leading 19.5 sacks in 2019, breaking Pro Football Hall of Famer Warren Sapp's team record of 16.5 set in 2000. The defense also featured two AP All-Rookie Team members: Sean Murphy-Bunting and Devin White. White led all rookies with 7.0 tackles per game and Sean Murphy-Bunting tied for the most interceptions by a rookie with three.

Bowles joined the Buccaneers after spending the previous four seasons as the head coach of the New York Jets (2015-18). Under Bowles, the Jets posted one of the best run defenses in the NFL, holding teams to just 4.00 yards per carry, the sixth-lowest figure in the NFL during that span, and allowing only 44 rushing touchdowns, tied for the eighth-least in that timeframe. Bowles' Jets defense also allowed opposing offenses to convert only 36.0 percent of third downs, the fourth-lowest mark in the league. Opposing passers completed just 60.6 percent of their passes against the Jets under Bowles, the third-lowest mark in the NFL.

Four different defensive players earned Pro Bowl berths under Bowles in New York, with cornerback Darrelle Revis and defensive lineman Muhammad Wilkerson being selected in 2015, defensive lineman Leonard Williams being nominated in 2016 and safety Jamal Adams voted to the game in 2018. The 2018 season also saw Jets return specialist Andre Roberts earn Pro Bowl distinction, along with being named first-team AP All-Pro as a kick returner.

Prior to serving as the head coach of the Jets, Bowles spent two seasons as the defensive coordinator of the Arizona Cardinals (2013-14), including winning Assistant Coach of the Year honors from the Pro Football Writers of America and the Associated Press in 2014. During Bowles' time in Arizona, the Cardinals' defense allowed the third-fewest rushing touchdowns (14), the fifth-fewest points per game (19.5) and the fifth-fewest rushing yards per game (96.6). Bowles' defenses in Arizona also showed a knack for taking the ball away, recording the fifth-most interceptions in the NFL (38) and the most defensive touchdowns in the league, with nine.

While Bowles led the Cardinals' defense, he saw cornerback Patrick Peterson earn first-team AP All-Pro honors in 2013 and earn Pro Bowl honors both years (2013-14). Defensive end John Abraham (2013), cornerback Antonio Cromartie (2014) and defensive end Calais Campbell (2014) each also earned Pro Bowl selections.

Bowles spent one year with the Philadelphia Eagles (2012), serving as the team's secondary coach before being named interim defensive coordinator for the final 10 games of the season. Philadelphia finished ninth in passing yards allowed (216.9 per game) that season.

Before joining the Eagles, Bowles worked as the assistant head coach/secondary coach for the Miami Dolphins for four seasons (2008-11). In the 2011 season, he was named interim head coach for the final three games of the year, going 2-1. Under Bowles' tutelage, Miami's secondary held opposing quarterbacks to a 58.1 completion percentage over that span, the seventh-lowest mark in the NFL.

Prior to his time in Miami, Bowles worked as the defensive backs coach for the Dallas Cowboys (2005-07), coaching three different players to the Pro Bowl (safety Ken Hamlin, cornerback Terence Newman and safety Roy Williams).

His NFL coaching career began in 2000 as the defensive backs coach of the New York Jets, coaching a unit that allowed just 18.3 passing yards per game, the sixth-lowest in the NFL. Following his season in New York, Bowles spent four years with the Cleveland Browns, working as the team's defensive nickel package coach (2001-03) and secondary coach (2004). In 2001, the team set a franchise record with 33 interceptions and in 2004, the Browns allowed the fifth-fewest passing yards in the NFL (181.3 per game).

Before coaching in the NFL, Bowles spent one season as the defensive coordinator at Morehouse College (1997) and two seasons as the defensive coordinator at Grambling State (1998-99).

Bowles played collegiately at Temple and, despite going undrafted in the 1986 NFL Draft, played eight years in the NFL, with the Washington Redskins (1986-90; 1992-93) and the San Francisco 49ers (1991). He was a starter on the 1987 Redskins team that won Super Bowl XXII. Following his retirement as a player, Bowles spent two seasons (1995-96) with the Green Bay Packers player personnel department.

A native of New Jersey, Bowles and his wife, Taneka, have three sons, Todd Jr., Troy and Tyson. Todd Jr. currently plays collegiate football at Long Island, while Troy plays his collegiate football career at Georgia. The Bowles family is actively involved in the Tampa Bay community supporting organizations including Autism Speaks, The Spring of Tampa Bay, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Tampa Bay, and the Tampa Bay Buccaneers Foundation.

BOWLES AT A GLANCE

YEARS	COLLEGE/PRO TEAM	POSITION
1982-85	Temple	Player
1986-90	Washington Redskins	Player
1991	San Francisco 49ers	Player
1992-93	Washington Redskins	Player
1995-96	Green Bay Packers	College Scouting Assistant
1997	Morehouse College	Defensive Coordinator/Secondary
1998-99	Grambling State	Defensive Coordinator/Defensive Backs
2000	New York Jets	Defensive Backs
2001-03	Cleveland Browns	Defensive Nickel Package
2004	Cleveland Browns	Secondary
2005-07	Dallas Cowboys	Defensive Backs
2008-11	Miami Dolphins	Assistant Head Coach/Secondary
2011	Miami Dolphins	Interim Head Coach
2012	Philadelphia Eagles	Secondary/Interim Defensive Coordinator
2013-14	Arizona Cardinals	Defensive Coordinator
2015-18	New York Jets	Head Coach
2019-21	**Tampa Bay Buccaneers**	**Defensive Coordinator**
2022-Pres.	**Tampa Bay Buccaneers**	**Head Coach**

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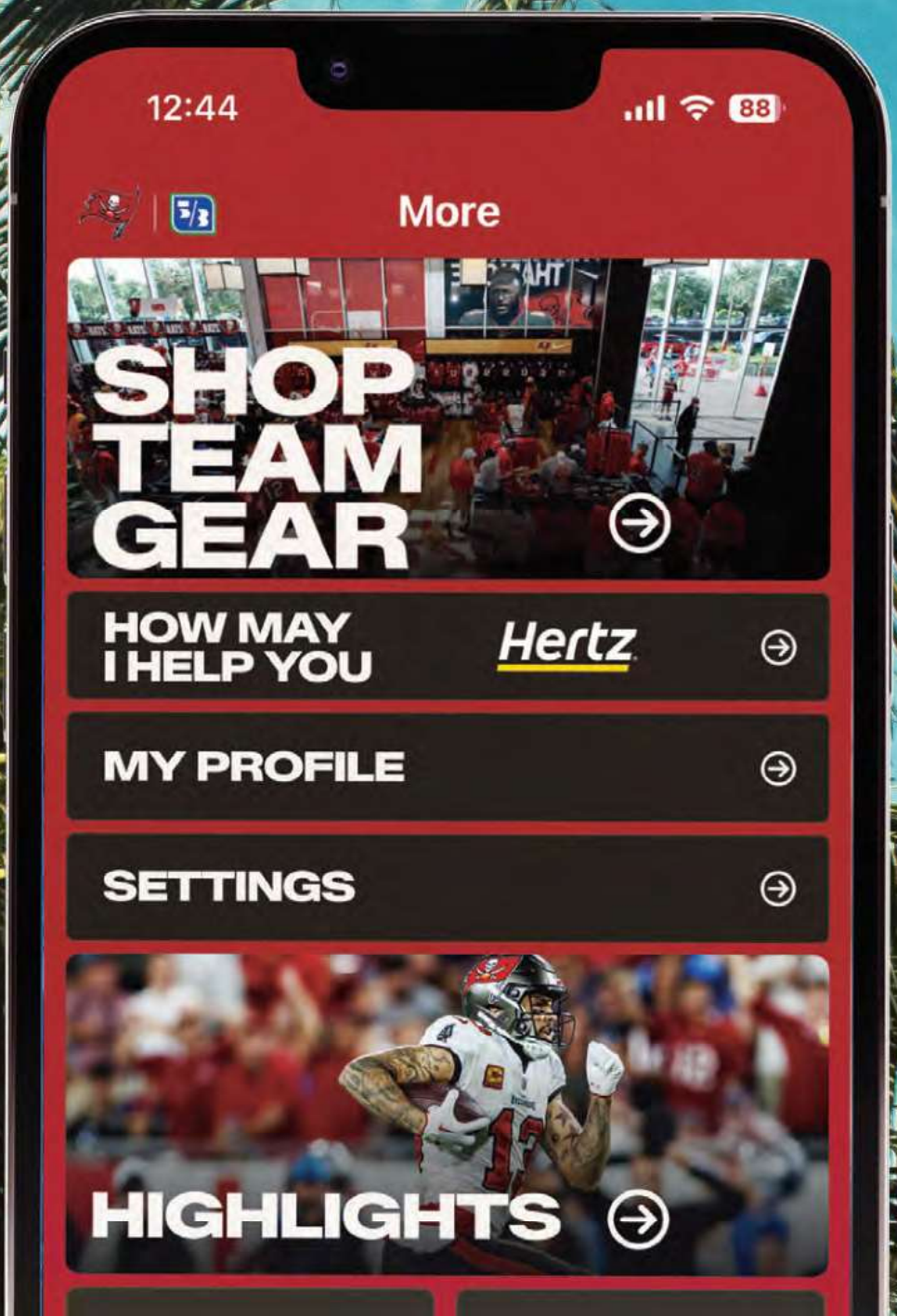

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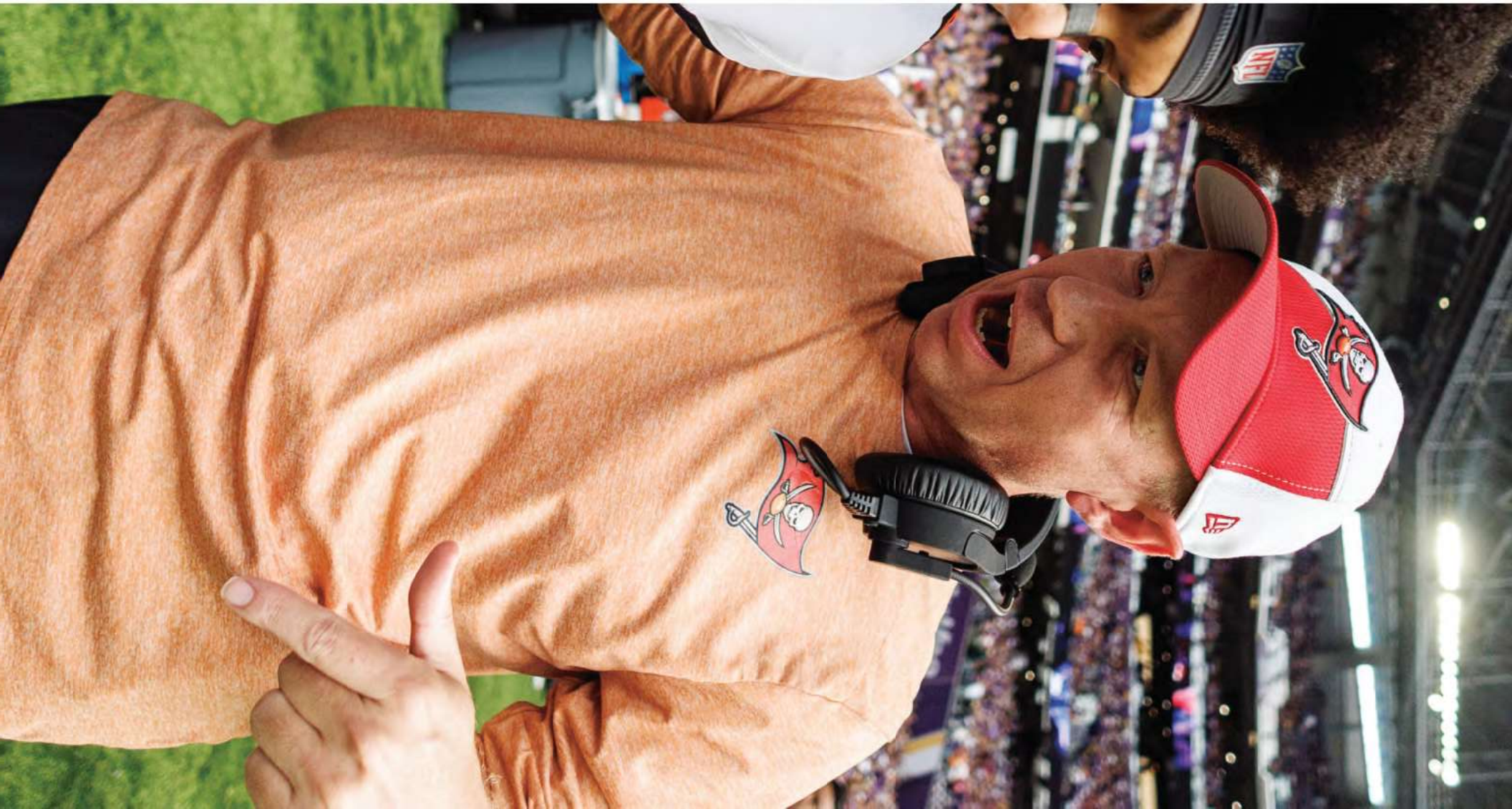

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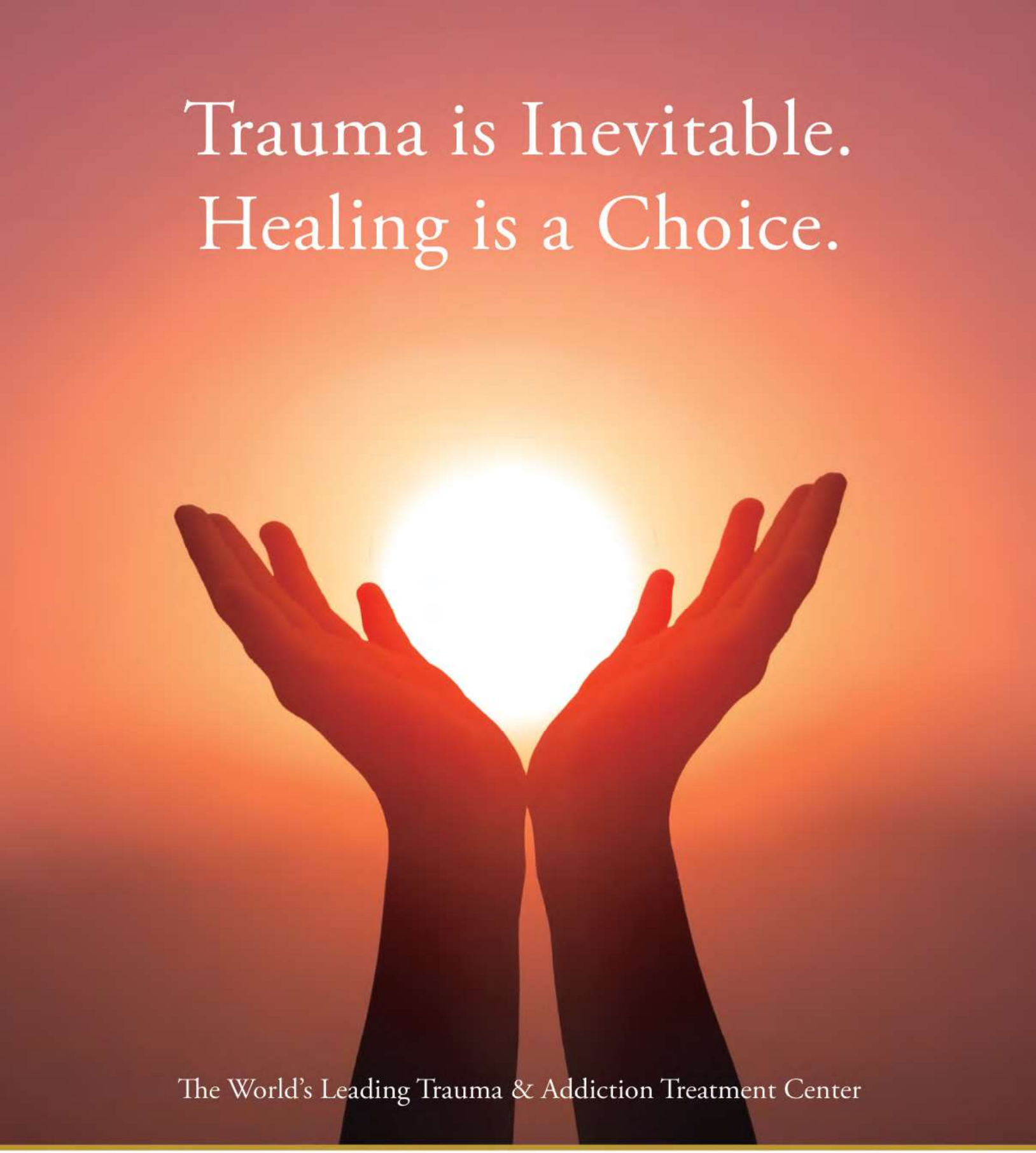

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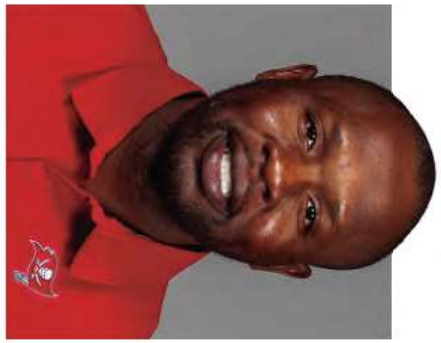

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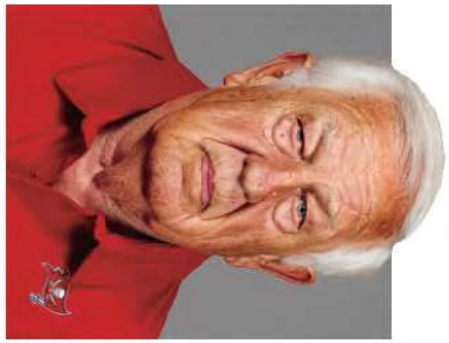

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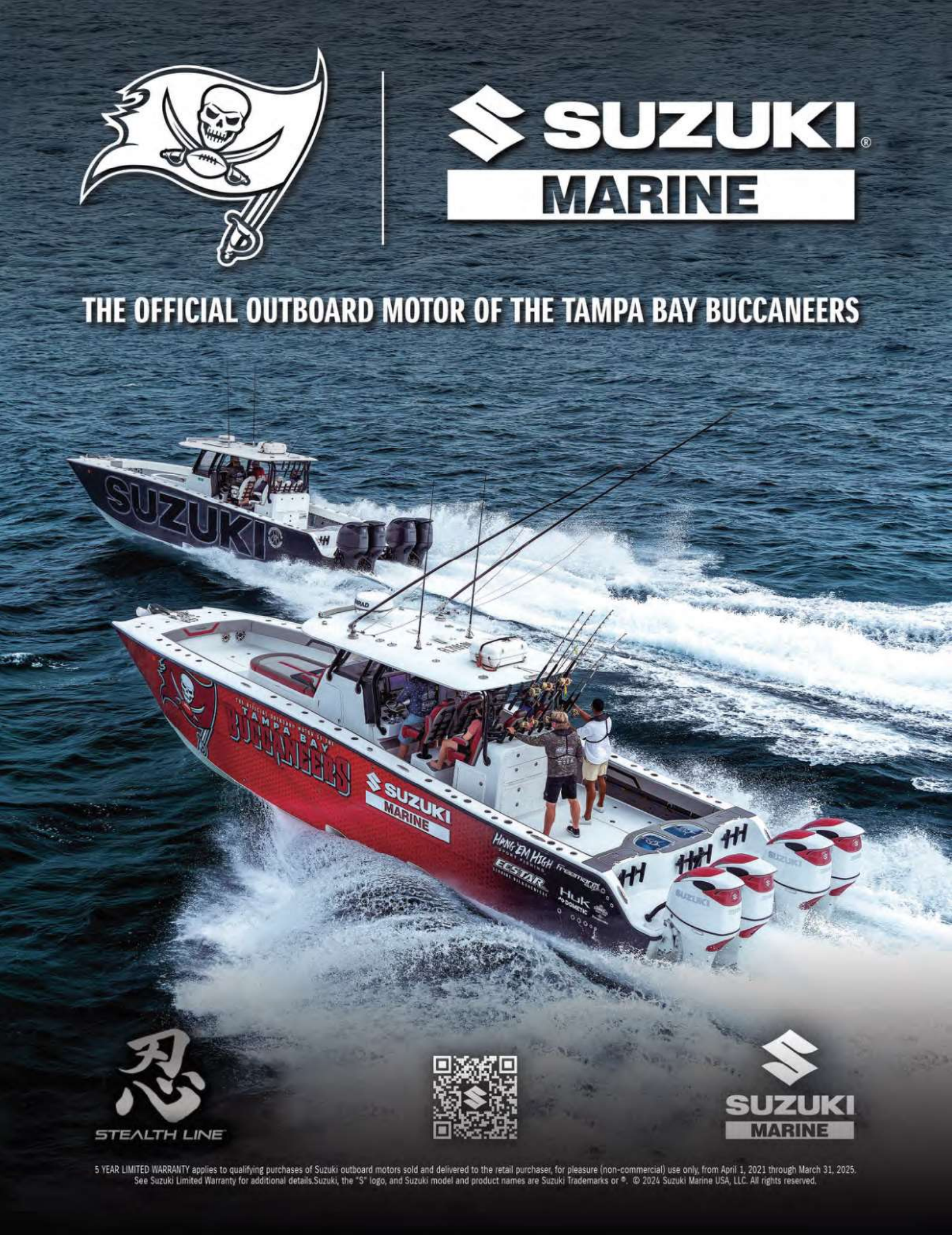

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2024 BUCCANEERS ROSTER

(AS OF AUGUST 22, 2024)

NUMERICAL

NO.	NAME	POS.	HT.	WT.	AGE	NFL EXP.	COLLEGE
0	Yaya Diaby	OLB	6-4	270	25	2	Louisville
1	Rachaad White	RB	6-0	214	25	3	Arizona State
2	Kyle Trask	QB	6-5	236	26	4	Florida
3	Jordan Whitehead	S	5-10	198	27	7	Pittsburgh
4	Chase McLaughlin	K	6-0	190	28	6	Illinois
5	Jake Camarda	P	6-1	193	25	3	Georgia
6	Baker Mayfield	QB	6-1	215	29	7	Oklahoma
7	Bucky Irving	RB	5-10	195	22	R	Oregon
8	SirVocea Dennis	LB	6-0	230	24	2	Pittsburgh
9d	Joe Tryon-Shoyinka	OLB	6-5	259	25	4	Washington
9o	Kameron Johnson	WR	5-10	170	22	R	Barton
10	Trey Palmer	WR	6-1	190	23	2	Nebraska
11	John Wolford	QB	6-1	218	28	5	Wake Forest
13	Mike Evans	WR	6-5	231	30	11	Texas A&M
14	Chris Godwin	WR	6-1	209	28	8	Penn State
15	Jalen McMillan	WR	6-1	192	22	R	Washington
16	Keenan Isaac	CB	6-3	190	24	1	Alabama State
17	Raleigh Webb	WR	6-2	204	26	2	The Citadel
18	Rakim Jarrett	WR	6-0	192	23	2	Maryland
19	Nolan Cooney	P	6-3	202	27	1	Syracuse
21	Andrew Hayes	CB	6-0	195	23	R	Central Arkansas
22	Chase Edmonds	RB	5-9	201	28	7	Fordham
23	Tykee Smith	S	5-10	202	23	R	Georgia
24	Tyrek Funderburk	CB	6-0	185	23	R	Appalachian State
25	Sterling Shepard	WR	5-10	198	31	9	Oklahoma
26	Kaevon Merriweather	S	6-0	212	24	2	Iowa
27	Zyon McCollum	CB	6-2	199	25	3	Sam Houston State
28	Cephus Johnson III	WR	6-5	220	24	1	Southeastern Louisiana
29	Christian Izien	S	5-10	200	24	2	Rutgers
30	DJ Williams	RB	6-0	225	24	R	Arizona
31	Antoine Winfield Jr.	S	5-9	203	26	5	Minnesota
32	Josh Hayes	DB	6-0	190	25	2	Kansas State
33	Jose Ramirez	OLB	6-2	252	25	1	Eastern Michigan
34	Bryce Hall	CB	6-1	202	26	5	Virginia
35	Jamel Dean	CB	6-1	206	27	6	Auburn
36	Chris McDonald Jr.	CB	5-10	192	24	R	Toledo
37	Tavierre Thomas	CB	5-10	205	28	7	Ferris State
38	Rashad Wisdom	S	5-9	210	23	R	Texas-San Antonio
39	Marcus Banks	S	6-0	190	23	R	Mississippi State
41	Ko Kieft	TE	6-5	265	26	3	Minnesota
43	Chris Braswell	OLB	6-3	255	22	R	Alabama
44d	Jay Person	OLB	6-2	237	24	R	Tennessee-Chattanooga
44o	Sean Tucker	RB	5-10	205	22	2	Syracuse
45	Ramon Jefferson	RB	5-10	210	24	R	Kentucky
46	Kalen DeLoach	LB	6-1	212	23	R	Florida State
48	Antonio Grier Jr.	LB	6-1	230	24	R	Arkansas
49d	Shaun Peterson Jr.	OLB	6-3	240	24	R	Central Florida
49o	Sal Cannella	TE	6-5	242	27	1	Auburn
50	Vita Vea	NT	6-4	347	29	7	Washington
51	J.J. Russell	LB	6-1	225	25	3	Memphis
52	K.J. Britt	LB	6-0	235	25	4	Auburn
53	Vi Jones	LB	6-2	225	26	2	North Carolina State
54	Lavonte David	LB	6-1	233	34	13	Nebraska
56	Brandon Matterson	DT	6-2	295	24	R	Texas-San Antonio
57	Daniel Grzesiak	OLB	6-1	246	23	R	Cincinnati
58	Markees Watts	OLB	6-1	240	24	2	Charlotte
59	Judge Culpepper	DL	6-4	293	24	R	Toledo
60	Xavier Delgado	G	6-4	329	24	R	Missouri
62	Graham Barton	C	6-5	314	22	R	Duke
65	Ryan Johnson	OL	6-2	306	23	R	Youngstown State
66	Avery Jones	G	6-4	307	24	R	Auburn
67	Luke Goedeke	T	6-5	312	25	3	Central Michigan
68	Ben Bredeson	G	6-5	315	26	5	Michigan
69	Cody Mauch	G	6-6	303	25	2	North Dakota State
70	Robert Hainsey	C	6-4	306	26	4	Notre Dame
71	Lorenz Metz	OL	6-9	310	27	R	Cincinnati
72	Luke Haggard	OL	6-7	305	24	1	Indiana
73	Brandon Walton	OL	6-5	300	26	3	Florida Atlantic
74	Earnest Brown IV	DL	6-5	300	25	3	Northwestern
75	Lwal Uguak	DL	6-4	269	24	R	TCU
77	Justin Skule	T	6-6	315	27	5	Vanderbilt
78	Tristan Wirfs	T	6-5	320	25	5	Iowa
79	Elijah Klein	G	6-4	319	24	R	Texas-El Paso
80	Tanner Knue	WR	5-11	178	24	R	Eastern Michigan
81	Ryan Miller	WR	6-2	221	24	1	Furman
82	Devin Culp	TE	6-4	237	24	R	Washington
83	Cody Thompson	WR	6-2	205	28	3	Toledo
84	Tanner Taula	TE	6-6	255	25	1	Illinois State
85	Latreal Jones	WR	6-1	195	25	R	Southern Mississippi
86	Evan Deckers	LS	6-3	252	25	1	Duke
87	Payne Durham	TE	6-5	255	24	2	Purdue
88	Cade Otton	TE	6-5	247	25	3	Washington
89	David Wells	TE	6-6	260	29	4	San Diego State
90	Logan Hall	DL	6-6	283	24	3	Houston
91	Mike Greene	DL	6-3	293	25	2	James Madison
92	William Gholston	DL	6-6	281	33	12	Michigan State
94	Calijah Kancey	DL	6-0	280	23	2	Pittsburgh
95	C.J. Brewer	DL	6-2	290	26	1	Coastal Carolina
96	Greg Gaines	DL	6-1	312	28	6	Washington
97	Zach Triner	LS	6-3	245	33	6	Assumption
98	Anthony Nelson	OLB	6-7	271	27	6	Iowa

INJURED RESERVE

NO.	NAME	POS.	HT.	WT.	AGE	NFL EXP.	COLLEGE
61	Silas Dzansi	T	6-5	335	26	1	Virginia Tech
76	Sua Opeta	G	6-4	305	28	5	Weber S

ALPHABETICAL

NO.	NAME	POS.
39	Banks, Marcus	S
62	Barton, Graham	C
43	Braswell, Chris	OLB
68	Bredeson, Ben	G
95	Brewer, C.J.	DL
52	Britt, K.J.	LB
74	Brown IV, Earnest	DL
5	Camarda, Jake	P
49o	Cannella, Sal	TE
19	Cooney, Nolan	P
82	Culp, Devin	TE
59	Culpepper, Judge	DL
54	David, Lavonte	LB
35	Dean, Jamel	CB
86	Deckers, Evan	LS
60	Delgado, Xavier	G
46	DeLoach, Kalen	LB
8	Dennis, SirVocea	LB
0	Diaby, Yaya	OLB
87	Durham, Payne	TE
22	Edmonds, Chase	RB
13	Evans, Mike	WR
24	Funderburk, Tyrek	CB
96	Gaines, Greg	DL
92	Gholston, William	DL
14	Godwin, Chris	WR
67	Goedeke, Luke	T
91	Greene, Mike	DL
48	Grier Jr., Antonio	LB
57	Grzesiak, Daniel	OLB
72	Haggard, Luke	OL
70	Hainsey, Robert	C
34	Hall, Bryce	CB
90	Hall, Logan	DL
21	Hayes, Andrew	CB
32	Hayes, Josh	DB
7	Irving, Bucky	RB
16	Isaac, Keenan	CB
29	Izien, Christian	S
18	Jarrett, Rakim	WR
45	Jefferson, Ramon	RB
9o	Johnson, Kameron	WR
65	Johnson, Ryan	OL
28	Johnson III, Cephus	WR
53	Jones, Vi	LB
66	Jones, Avery	G
85	Jones, Latreal	WR
94	Kancey, Calijah	DL
41	Kieft, Ko	TE
79	Klein, Elijah	G
80	Knue, Tanner	WR
56	Matterson, Brandon	DT
69	Mauch, Cody	G
6	Mayfield, Baker	QB
27	McCollum, Zyon	CB
36	McDonald Jr., Chris	CB
4	McLaughlin, Chase	K
15	McMillan, Jalen	WR
26	Merriweather, Kaevon	S
71	Metz, Lorenz	OL
81	Miller, Ryan	WR
98	Nelson, Anthony	OLB
88	Otton, Cade	TE
10	Palmer, Trey	WR
44d	Person, Jay	OLB
49d	Peterson Jr., Shaun	OLB
33	Ramirez, Jose	OLB
51	Russell, J.J.	LB
25	Shepard, Sterling	WR
77	Skule, Justin	T
23	Smith, Tykee	S
84	Taula, Tanner	TE
37	Thomas, Tavierre	CB
83	Thompson, Cody	WR
2	Trask, Kyle	QB
97	Triner, Zach	LS
9d	Tryon-Shoyinka, Joe	OLB
44o	Tucker, Sean	RB
75	Uguak, Lwal	DL
50	Vea, Vita	NT
73	Walton, Brandon	OL
58	Watts, Markees	OLB
17	Webb, Raleigh	WR
89	Wells, David	TE
1	White, Rachaad	RB
3	Whitehead, Jordan	S
30	Williams, DJ	RB
31	Winfield Jr., Antoine	S
78	Wirfs, Tristan	T
38	Wisdom, Rashad	S
11	Wolford, John	QB

INJURED RESERVE

NO.	NAME	POS.
61	Dzansi, Silas	T
76	Opeta, Sua	G

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YAYA

DIABY

#0

OLB

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College: **LOUISVILLE**

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FROM ZERO-STAR RECRUIT TO BUCS' ROOKIE SENSATION

YAYA DIABY'S UNORTHODOX RISE

Buccaneers' outside linebacker Yaya Diaby did not have a scholarship offer coming out of high school and took a gap year working as a wheelchair assistant at the Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport. A behind-the-scenes look at his journey to the NFL's doorstep.

BY Brianna Dix

The air is thick with anticipation. The boisterous crowd at Raymond James Stadium erupts – a competing force to the mental chess match taking place in the trenches below. Linemen stoically walk into position. Yaya Diaby glances to his left and a recollection occurs. The words of his coach echo in his head: "If the receiver puts his inside foot up, that means he is going to crack block you." Diaby motions with his left arm to signal the defensive unit. He takes a slight step to the left and then like a statue etched out of stone, becomes stationary. Time stands still as the noise from spectators softens to a mild ringing in his ear, drowned out by the sound of an exhale. The ball is snapped, and collisions begin. Jacksonville's receiver drops in an attempt to chip Diaby, but instead he effortlessly powers through the shoulder of the blocker and drives him backward. Keeping his eyes disciplined on the congestion, Diaby diagnoses the end-around and clips Calvin Ridley's legs, dropping him for a loss in the backfield. He delightedly throws his fist into the air, basking in ecstasy. That moment, triggered by a flood of flashbacks that chronicle Diaby's tumultuous journey to the NFL, is laced into his mental archives.

...

On the grass at North Clayton High School, Diaby demonstratively stands in the middle of the practice field and takes a mental photograph. Every step he takes in his remarkably white New Balance sneakers conjures up fragmented clips from his sensational rookie season for the Buccaneers and his high school playing days. In an instant, the past and present collide. Diaby and his towering physique present the antithesis of a once-too small defensive end from Riverdale, Georgia. As the rehearsing high school drumline plays North Clayton's fight song in an almost too-perfect full-circle moment, the Bucs' outside linebacker is hit with a realization. Although formed amidst trials, it is a startling revelation that illuminates Diaby's perspective.

"I feel like if I didn't go through the hard times, it would not have made me the man I am today. I think sometimes God will break you down and make you see different things in order to make you grateful. I am where I am at because I believed, and I trusted God."

Diaby's path to one of the largest stages in sports defied the conventional mold. At the age of two, Diaby moved to Guinea to live with his grandparents for three years before returning to the U.S. His father Mohamed immigrated to the United States in 1989, while his mother Mariama arrived years later in 1997. Both wanted Yaya to experience an educational and cultured upbringing in their native country of West Africa, brimming with tradition and a reliance on faith. There, he was exposed to a variety of dialects, including Maninka, the main language of the Maninka ethnic group in the upper region. In time, Diaby became fluent in the language, joining his parents.

Diaby did not grow up immersed in football, which makes his captivation by the sport even more profound. The NFL, with its own cultivated theme song and revered day of the week in the United States, never monopolized the TV in the Diaby household. Despite the apparent disconnection to the gridiron, with soccer usurping everything in African culture, the Diaby siblings were very competitive, and it translated to sports. From bowling and basketball to soccer and even food races – who could get the last bite (Yaya won) – the trio battled.

When Diaby broke the basketball rim from incessant dunking, a fight nearly ensued. His little brother, Ibrahim and his older sister, Fatim, pushed him to be the best version of himself. Although their methods may have raised question marks, including jumping down a staircase and getting lost in the city post-Ramadan, the motive for the siblings stayed the same: Fashion an unbreakable connection. As the trio grew, Ibrahim and Fatim noticed Diaby's voracious passion for football and his unceasing drive. The pair morphed into encouraging bystanders, waiting for the day that their brother's ability was discovered.

His close-knit group of friends in Georgia introduced him to American football, teasing, "You do not have any extracurriculars after school. Come play football with us." When Diaby tried on his first football threads at 11, he felt a euphoric sense of freedom at the line of scrimmage. As the helmet closed over his face like a vault door, peace transcended. The Xs and Os became a liberating escape for him and nurtured his mental health. It was his avenue of staying out of trouble and gradually,

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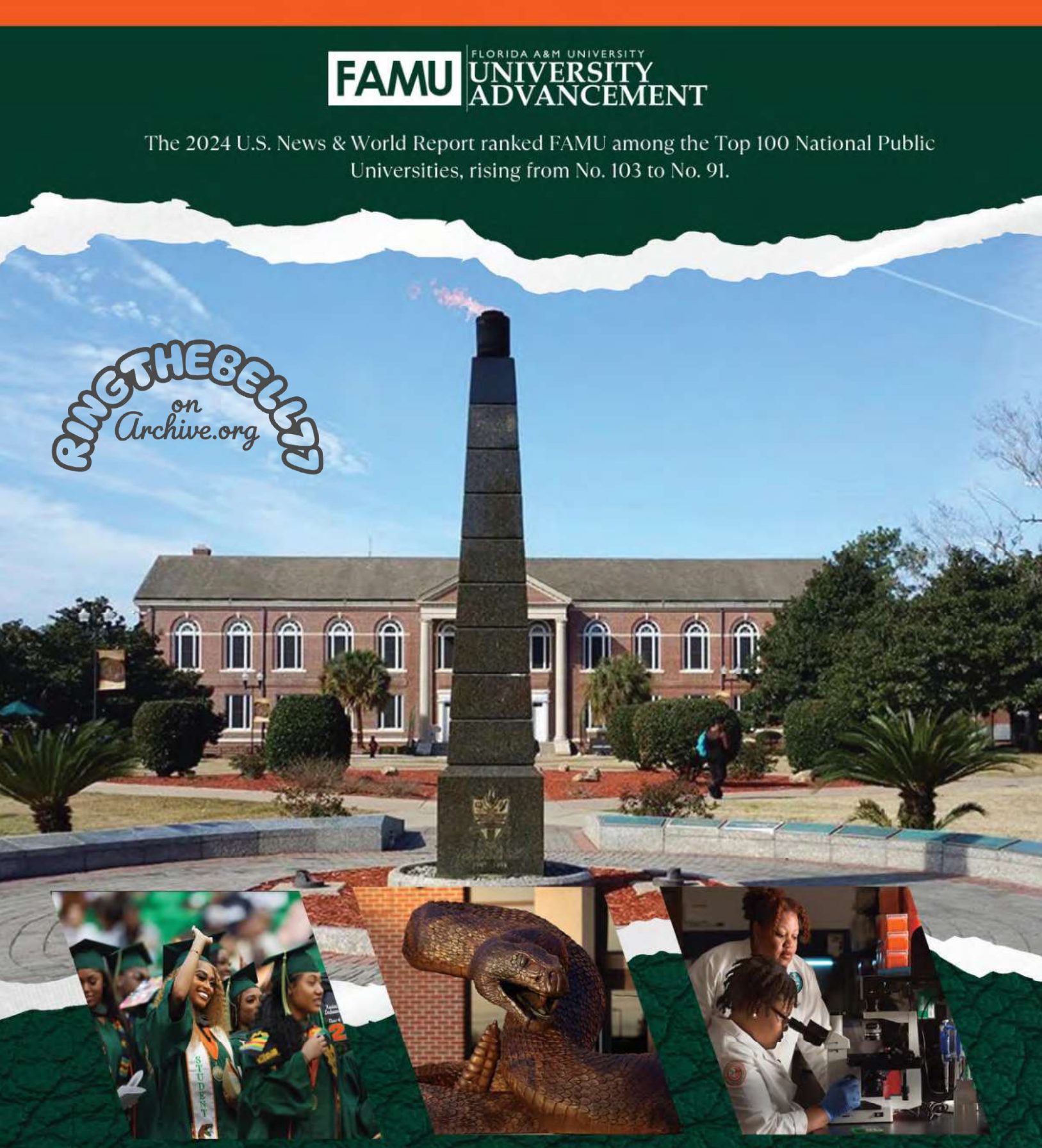

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the game manifested into more than a passive hobby for Diaby. It became his destiny, propelling him forward.

In middle school, he played defensive end, but due to his small frame Diaby was moved to kicker at the outset of his freshman season. At North Clayton, Diaby lettered in football, basketball, wrestling and track. As a senior, he guided North Clayton to the 4A playoffs, playing multiple positions and earning All-State and first team All-Region honors in 2016. Diaby was a zero-star recruit in the Class of 2017, a result of his then-undersized 6-foot-4, 200-pound frame. After receiving no offers, Diaby took a year off and worked at the bustling Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport as a wheelchair assistant. The humbling venture forced Diaby to develop patience with passengers in what is known as 'Airport Purgatory,' and it fostered fortitude.

The B concourse became his favorite because it marked the international hub where Diaby could interact with individuals from all over the globe. As he remembered the first passenger he helped, Diaby let out a face-consuming grin. In the jetway, an elderly gentleman served as a blessing in disguise on an unassuming workday. The inquisitive man showed genuine interest in not only Diaby's background, but his aspirations. Like it happened yesterday, Diaby repeated the words he said to the gentleman.

"I am here temporarily but I have faith that I will find football again."

As those words hung in the air, the stranger in the wheelchair pulled $100 out of his pocket and handed it to Diaby. Although brief, that interaction and kind gesture is forever entrenched in Diaby's mind. That bill signified a tangible investment in his lofty dream, and it left a sizeable imprint.

"Football being taken away from me when I was working at the airport, really opened my eyes and made me see that when I got the opportunity again, I would take full advantage of it and work hard every day I get a chance to," Diaby reflected.

During that year-long season of waiting, he was subjected to the unvarnished opinions of others in his life on a recurring basis.

Give up on football.

Get a job.

You are a disappointment.

Find another career path.

Despite the disillusionment that often materialized into a weighted fog, Diaby stayed the course and refused to give up. With a gnawing sense of unfulfillment, his aspirations only grew. Diaby blocked out the belittling negativity and instead, chose to view it as a mere diversion fueling his mission. His mother, Mariama, became the backbone of his quest. Her unrelenting prayers, although unquantifiable, became the strength that sustained him and the force that prevailed in his life.

"Your mom's prayers follow you," Diaby expressed. "Every second of the day she is praying for me. I call her every day for five minutes just to hear her voice and so she can pray for me. She is such a blessing. She owns a salon, but I have watched her over the years closely. When it came to school, she would go and buy each one of us – my siblings and I - like one or two outfits for the year to wear. She was a warrior and is such an inspiration to me. Every day I see her fighting and I am inspired. It made me want to never disappoint her, because when I did not get the opportunity to play right out of high school, my dad let his frustration get the best of him and his words made my mom cry. Ever since then, I told her, 'I will never make you cry again.' I have always had a good work ethic but ever since that day, I do not care what it is, I am going to give it my all."

With every passenger he pushed at Hartsfield-Jackson, every tackle he made in the yard and every internalized thought, Diaby remembered the promise he made to his mom. She became his 'why,' the moral compass that shaped his undeterred dedication. Her belief provided him with the courage to wholeheartedly pursue his grand ambitions.

Eventually, those prayers were answered, and the 'big break' finally arrived. A friend that worked at the airport encouraged Diaby to

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attend a tryout at Georgia Military College. Without hesitation, Diaby paid the $45 fee and left coaches stunned with how quickly he managed to overwhelm offensive linemen. Diaby received a call two days later and was given the chance to walk on. He earned a scholarship in 2018 and during his two seasons at the JUCO program Diaby accumulated 77 tackles, 24.0 tackles for loss and 7.0 sacks.

While attending Georgia Military, Diaby primarily played special teams during the first year and transformed his body by eating three plates at every meal to gain mass so he could play defensive end the next season. The bulk-up during his sophomore season paid dividends, elevating his play to another level. Regarded as a three-star JUCO prospect, Diaby was the No. 3 JUCO strongside defensive end and the No. 2 JUCO recruit out of Georgia in the 2020 cycle. Offers began filling the mailbox on a routine basis and numerous campus visits commenced.

order to reach peak potential on the field, Diaby cut out fat, worked with Louisville teammate Yasir Abdullah to enhance his pass rush arsenal and got his weight up to 275 pounds. He was named a Third-Team All-ACC selection for his contributions on the gridiron and although his popularity grew along with the accolades, Diaby remained true to himself.

"Middle of that second year, he starts to become a well known – not local legend – but everyone knew that Yaya is a great player," described Ivey. "That did not go to his head. That did not change him. He had a great year production-wise during his senior season in 2022. He was getting to the quarterback, and he was creating big-time success and people were noticing. Scouts were showing up but that did not change him. A lot of times when you are 18, you are so worried about the status quo and what others think of you and he never was. He was just worried about doing the best that he could do at all times and being as positive as he could be as a player and as a leader."

split, showcasing his acceleration off the ball. In addition, Diaby dominated the Senior Bowl, exploding through gaps and overwhelming blockers in one-on-one drills like a wrecking ball. Linemen could hardly get out of their stance fast enough before Diaby was flying past into the backfield. Those debuts became a microcosm of Diaby's unpretentious outlook on life.

"You can point to him as someone who has faced adversity and has overcome it," said Bucs' Mid-Atlantic Scout Brian McLaughlin. "He could have given up and there were people in his life that were trying to tell him that his football playing days were over and that his dream was done. Nobody spent more time in the building in college than him. I think there a lot of young players that are scared of feedback and taking criticism and applying it. He was everything that we could have wanted in a guy that had overcome adversity, loves his team and cares about winning. Those are the guys that you want to bet on. There is a lot at stake, obviously, and you want to bet on the guys that are innately wired to reach their ceiling."

> "I DO NOT CARE WHAT IT IS, I AM GOING TO GIVE IT MY ALL."
>
> YAYA DIABY

During that two-year span, Mariama woke up every night at one or two in the morning, got on her knees and began praying for Yaya. "He just wants to play football," she pleaded. "I am begging you to help us and for one day, Yaya to go to the NFL." Her persistent prayers permeated every aspect of his life, providing intercession and guidance en route to the pinnacle. The initial steppingstone came when Diaby committed to Louisville based on his genuine connection with linebackers coach Mark Ivey. The first time Diaby stepped on the gridiron as a Division I athlete, reality set in, evoking emotion. He bet on himself and in that singular climactic moment donning red and black - his name embroidered on the back - the trajectory of his life shifted.

"When I went out there, I actually teared up because I realized I had taken the next step," stated Diaby. "I was not supposed to be here, and I had been around so many people that did not get the opportunity to be where I am at, and it was a surreal moment. I cried and said, 'I'm really here.' It was a game against Western Kentucky and ever since then, it has been up."

In 21 appearances and 19 starts over the 2020 and 2021 seasons for the Cards, Diaby tallied 57 tackles, including 5.5 for a loss. He conducted a breakout campaign in 2022, with personal bests in sacks (9.0) and tackles for loss (14.0). In

Coach Ivey routinely strolled down the hallway at Louisville and would see Diaby through the frosted window studying film in the meeting room at all hours. He relished the opportunity to learn, getting better than he was the day before. What impressed the Cards' coaching staff more than Diaby's unquenchable football hunger was his consistency. Regardless of circumstances, Diaby showed up to the practice field or meetings with his signature contagious smile, ready to absorb whatever was being thrown his way. Diaby never needed motivation or an elaborate rah-rah speech to get fired up. Instead, he was a self-starter, intrinsically hardwired to give 110%.

Diaby experienced football being taken away from him once and that prompted an insatiable commitment to his craft. His always-doubted, never-thwarted creed sparked success during the pre-draft process. Diaby enhanced his athletic profile and draft stock at the 2023 NFL Scouting Combine, leaving onlookers salivating. He ran the 40-yard dash in 4.51 seconds, leapt 10 feet and 0 inches (120") in the broad jump and 37" in the vertical.

Based on those measurements, Diaby earned a Relative Athletic Score (RAS) of 9.86 out of 10, ranking 24th out of 1,629 defensive ends from 1987 through 2023 (98th percentile). He recorded an impressive 1.56-second 10-yard

...

Perched on the red brick steps of his childhood home, Diaby averted his gaze to the open field he frequented as a kid, and nostalgia returned. As the words 'Draft Day' resonated and his thoughts fixated on the metamorphic moment, his contemplative stare shifted to childlike enchantment.

April 28th, 2023, a day that seemed to last an eternity. Hours vanished and pick after pick, names came off the board in Round Two. The mood dimmed and Diaby felt a crippling knot growing in his stomach – stress. 'What is going on?' rolled through his subconscious every other second. The third round began and hope abounded in the room. Sitting next to his mother, Diaby had his eyes glued to the screen, gripping his cellphone with a force that could have broken a hand. The phone rang, altering Diaby's life. He answered, hands shaking, and heard words from Jason Licht he had been waiting for all his life, "We are about to make you a Buc."

As the room began spinning in a near out-of-body experience, Diaby managed to respond, "Thank you," as tears blurred his vision. His eager family exploded in cheers and applause that would rival any fanbase on game day. Subsequently, as his name echoed around the rented hotel space from the TV broadcast,

Diaby had a moment of clarity. While he hugged his mom, siblings and father, the only words impressed on his mind came out in a whisper, "Thank you, God. Thank you."

The Buccaneers selected Diaby with the 82nd overall pick of the draft. Initially, he lined up as an outside linebacker in base, due to his ability to set the edge, and contributed in sub-packages. After showing flashes on passing downs, Diaby earned a starting role following a two-sack performance against the San Francisco 49ers. His position coach, George Edwards, made the announcement at the beginning of a fall practice, "Yaya, you're with the one's." Even though the ensuing workout structure was monotonous, for Diaby, the news brought a palpable excitement. After the huddle broke, Diaby raced inside to call a familiar voice. On the other end of the phone call, Ibrahim offered brotherly advice, reminding Diaby to not get "complacent." Diaby took his brother's words to heart, vying to become the kind of player who could help shape the very spirit of the franchise.

Football and the artistry of athleticism mimic life. Inadvertently, it embodies the human spirit; the ability to rise after failing. Diaby's mindset in the trenches mirrors his approach to daily life: fight. Rather than buying into the marginalized narrative about his aspirations, Diaby accomplished the improbable through faith. He applies that same framework to the gridiron. If the initial power move does not work, he works a counter to defeat the offensive lineman across from him. Diaby tirelessly works through the whistle with heart, refusing to surrender – the archetype of toughness.

"I think his best trait is his relentless effort and motor," stated McLaughlin. "He can create an impact on the game because he is so relentless at his size and with his speed and because of those traits. I don't think he would have the same impact if he did not go as hard as he goes. He comes after guys consistently over and over and over again, and I think he wears people out that way and he really leaves it out on the field. He really empties his tank, and he is the type of player that is not going to take breaks. If you want him to get a break, you are going to have to tell him. When I look at what he did for us and the impact he had in 2023, it is because he never stopped coming."

Diaby exceeded expectations in 2023 and finished his rookie campaign with a team-high 7.5 sacks. He led all NFL rookies with 12 tackles for loss, serving as a catalyst in Todd Bowles' attack-styled, hybrid 4-3/3-4 system. He solidified the Bucs' defense with violence in pursuit, brute power and explosion off the ball. The freak specimen became a menace on loops and stunts with a running start, neutralizing the opposition into submission. Diaby, a natural force player, uses his length, get-off and active hands to generate leverage on opponents. He has the quickness in slanting to get small in the hole and collapse the pocket, along with the power to knock tackles back on bull rushes. Regardless of the success accumulated during his first year, Diaby is focused on improving his pad level and expanding his pass rush toolkit, including the heralded yet elusive long-arm maneuver and double swipe, weaponizing his explosion for 2024.

"A lot of times, guys have survived high school and whatever it is on talent alone and they do not understand that in order for me to advance this to that next level, it cannot just be talent; it has to be absolute desire, passion and fight and scrap and he has all of that stuff," stated Ivey. "The great thing about Yaya is you can tell him the thing that you think he needs to improve upon, and he goes and attempts to do that. He will keep attempting until he gets better at whatever it is."

In conjunction to his sensational production on the field, the Louisville product made his mark in team history in another way. Diaby became the first player in franchise annals to wear No. 0. For the first time in 2023, players were given the option to sport that number. As a reminder of his arduous journey from being a zero-star recruit to reaching the NFL's doorstep, Diaby chose that single digit. Zero. With it, he is the personification of perseverance. Each time Diaby slips the jersey over his shoulder pads and traces the numeral with his fingers, he utters a single yet profound word: grateful.

RACHAAD

WHITE

#1

RB

Height: **6'0**

Weight: **214**

College: **ARIZONA STATE**

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KYLE TRASK

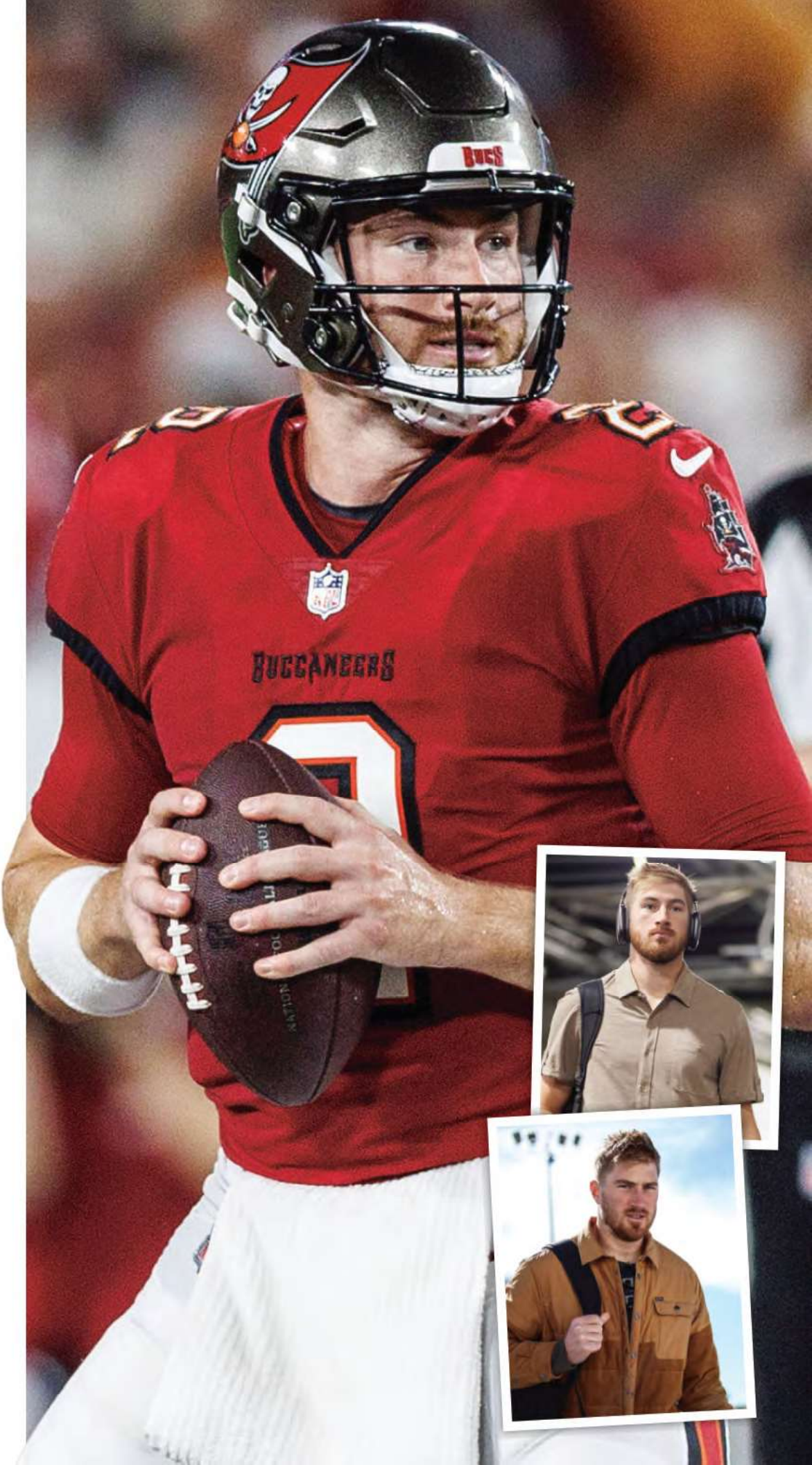
#2

QB

Height: **6'5**

Weight: **236**

College: **FLORIDA**



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JORDAN WHITEHEAD

#3

S

Height: **5'10**

Weight: **198**

College: **PITTSBURGH**

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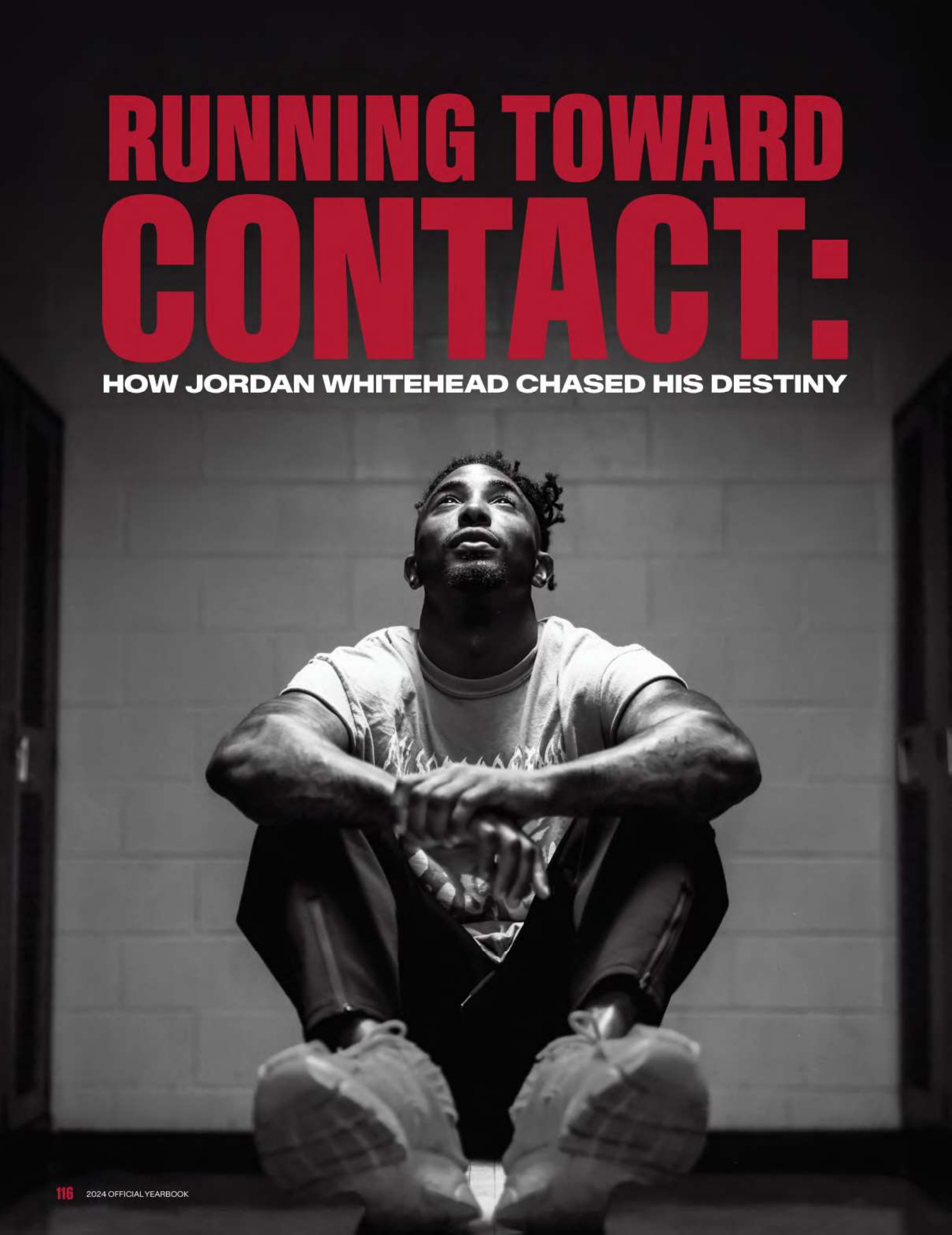

AFTER SIGNING A NEW CONTRACT WITH THE TAMPA BAY BUCCANEERS, JORDAN WHITEHEAD VENTURES BACK TO WHERE IT ALL BEGAN – THE PLACE THAT BUILT HIS DOWNHILL PROWESS ON THE GRIDIRON.

BY Brianna Dix

Time rewinds as Jordan Whitehead rounds the corner of his uncle's house in Center Township, Pennsylvania and steps into a nostalgic cache. He walks to his right and picks up a pair of disheveled, mismatched cleats and a laugh reverberates in the garage as memories come flooding back to him. His gaze averts to Stop Sign Hill, the famed landmark where he single-handedly beat 20 defenders attempting to tackle him during a cut drill. Whitehead walks towards the back wall and slows his pace, delicately tracing the height-indicator pencil markings he meticulously drew on the cement as a child.

Bench press goals line the grey exterior, etched in chalk, a tangible reminder of achievements eclipsed. From little league to Pitt Signing Day, newspaper clippings enshrine the walls forming a mural, chronicling every football milestone of Whitehead's career arc that his uncle kept. He peers around, each corner conjuring up memories. After a few reps with a 60-pound rusted dumbbell and the relic duct-taped leg press, he bends down and selects an all-purpose Riddell football pad, emblematic of the five-year-old little boy in pajamas that gripped the same cushion years prior. Whitehead stands in the middle of the humbling concrete 10X10 workout space, personifying its unconventional blue-collar essence. There, Whitehead's toughness was fashioned, and his physical play style on the gridiron was forged.

This breezy 75-degree day in Western PA, for this hard-hitting safety, opens a rare window into his makeup that reaches beyond what is typical. He is here, back where it all began. Whitehead's reminiscent hometown tour features his inaugural Wishes Gala, fourth-annual Youth Football Camp at Central Valley High School and reunion with his unequivocal support system. Much has changed over the previous five months for Whitehead, including a new permanent address. On March 14, Whitehead buzzed into the AdventHealth Training Center, inking a new contract with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers after a two-year stint with the New York Jets. Whitehead, originally a fourth-round selection by the Bucs in the 2018 NFL Draft, returns to the franchise where he started 55 games from 2018-21 and hoisted the Lombardi Trophy.

"We had to draw the line at some point, and I made a mistake," General Manager Jason Licht admitted via the Loose Cannons podcast. "I'm glad we got him back. It was a mistake that I regretted the minute we let him walk."

The significance of his encore with Tampa Bay becomes clear. Fundamentally, he is a vintage player in the modern era. Artists convey their origins in their work and athletes are no different. Whitehead encapsulates a brand of football that has become nearly obsolete. His approach to the game is symbolic of the bygone days of smash-mouth football. Bruising backs pushing the pile forward has faded into the annals of NFL history with the emergence of today's pass-centric game. Despite the evolution, power football can still exhilarate players and fans alike by establishing a mentality of dominion and breaking the opposition's will. Whitehead not only embraces contact, he has an insatiable desire for it. Stopping a running back short of the sticks on third down by delivering an earth-shattering hit is what Whitehead lives for; that is why he plays the game.

On the grand stage, Whitehead embodies the unquestioned principle that the Iron City operates by: grit.

He leisurely strolls down the hallway at his alma mater, Central Valley High School, and passes a glass case with his Bucs' jersey preserved inside. Since the 2010 merger of Center and Monaca into Central Valley, Whitehead is one of two players to reach the NFL's doorstep, along with Robert Foster. In a cut-off t-shirt, Whitehead walks with effortless charisma and nonchalance past the tribute, presenting the antithesis of stardom. Here, without his helmet or gladiator suit of armor, he is simply Jordan, the approachable and kind-hearted individual that makes others feel exceptional.

"I have said this from Day One, when recruiters were coming through, I challenged anybody to walk through these halls and to say, 'Jordan Whitehead,' and you would not get one negative word out of a teacher or a custodian or a cafeteria worker," beamed Mark Lyons, Whitehead's former high school head coach.

Like a kid trapped in a 27-year-old's body, Whitehead gleefully wanders down the corridor, past a plaque with a simple yet insightful engraving, 'Central Valley Football: A player who makes a team great is more valuable than a great player. – John Wooden.' He then crosses the threshold into his old locker room. Whitehead steps between the metal rows and opens a grated door with paint chips, hit with flashbacks as the time capsule unlocks. A beam spills through the skylight, illuminating the silhouette of the former teenager that captivated underneath the Friday Night Lights for the Warriors.

Back in 2011 against New Castle during his freshman year, Whitehead intercepted the first pass thrown his way and took it to the house for a 94-yard pick-six. The quarterback dropped back, and two wide receivers bunched on the right side

of the formation ran verticals, streaking down the grass. Whitehead blanketed the outside receiver, matching him stride-for-stride against the boundary. He maintained inside leverage and plucked the ball out of the air at the high point as it arrived. Whitehead raced toward the opposite end zone, as hash after hash disappeared. The boisterous crowd was drowned by the intensity of his panting. Whitehead cut inside to maneuver around traffic and crossed the goal line, nearly falling over from exhaustion. He became the first ninth grader on varsity and from that point on, Whitehead began cementing his reputation. He played with authority, grasping the enormity of the opportunity in front of him and a singular moment on November 23 became a microcosm of that sentiment.

In the 2013 WPIAL AA Championship against West Allegheny at Heinz Field in Pittsburgh, Whitehead delivered a ferocious hit that rattled the snow at the 15-yard line. That play, exemplifying his will, became a harbinger of things to come for Whitehead in the sports stratosphere. The quarterback dropped back and quickly delivered a pass to No.23 on the flat route to avoid the incoming blitzer. Whitehead, who was stationed 10 yards back from the ball, flew downhill like a man possessed. By the time the ball reached the opponent's hands, Whitehead had already stuck his foot in the ground and triggered. Checkmate. He threw him down for a loss, setting the tone. In that moment, with Western PA fortitude coursing through his veins, his trajectory shifted.

"I have always thought, your great athletes see the play differently than your average guy, I do not care what sport," states Lyons, leaning back on a bleacher. "Jordan had that ability. He could see a play from the snap and then already see what was going to happen two or three seconds without me fast-forwarding. We know that after we fast-forwarded. He already had that fast-forward playing in his own mind, the anticipation and his knack for taking the proper pursuit to the ball. He always looked faster because he was a step ahead, not only athletically but mentally."

Eight years later, an eerily similar game-defining play occurred, steamrolling the Buccaneers from the brink of greatness to the apex: Super Bowl LV. At Lambeau Field in the NFC Championship Game, Whitehead provided a surge of electricity. On third down, Aaron Rodgers dropped back, went through his initial progression and threw the ball to Aaron Jones flowing across the field on an under route as the pocket collapsed. Whitehead was lined up 10 yards off the line of scrimmage, recognized, then took off with a phenomenal first step. The second the ball hit Jones' hands, Whitehead, a heat-seeking missile, brought a jarring thud that echoed throughout the Frozen Tundra. Fumble. That indelible mark on the game led to a touchdown and subsequent 28-10 advantage for Tampa Bay. The Bucs went on to win 31-26, but that singular play, is etched in Bucs' lore and Whitehead's mental log.

There is a phrase in Western PA: "He leaves nothing." No safety embodies that adage more than Jordan Whitehead. Snap after snap, he leaves everything on the turf, sacrificing his body for the collective mission. Whitehead plays with reckless abandon, a result of strenuous training that caused Whitehead's parents to question if he bordered imbalance.

"Is this healthy?"

Whitehead's parents, Greg and Antonia, pondered those three words daily.

Their child needed no prodding from dad to go workout or engage in exercise. He was obsessed with the grind and pushed his body to the limit.

Even at six years old, the little boy who flexed his scrawny arms and a six-pack of ribs, irrefutably realized what it would take to achieve his lofty aspiration. Pigskin in hand and cleats on his feet, he wholeheartedly pursued what set his soul ablaze. Whitehead's exclusive focus became manifesting his dream of playing professional football. Like Groundhog Day, with each sunrise mimicking the previous 24 hours, Whitehead unfalteringly toiled in the garage with one recurring creed: No one will out-work me.

"What are you going to do if you do not make it to the NFL?" Antonia would inquire, as any protective mom would.

Undeterred, Whitehead had no backup plan. If his mind could conceive it, Whitehead knew he could achieve it through diligent effort.

He had an unrivaled zeal for the game of football that could not be stifled. Greg and Antonia sensed something unusual and distinct inside of their son, who was hardwired to incessantly watch clip cut-ups and lift weights with the exuberance of an undisputed heavyweight champion ... at age six. Both parents, despite seeing the obvious talent their son exuded at tournaments, relented. They prayed without ceasing and let Jordan make his own decisions.

"You want it to happen, but you didn't want to get too eager about him making it into the NFL," described Greg. "You take it in steps - get through high school then get through college. Then, hopefully you get to the next level. There are a lot of football players out there in this country. The road is long, and it is hard, so we just prayed. Our lives revolved around him doing his thing and taking him to games."

Whitehead was exposed to professional football at an early age and saw it as an attainable goal. Darelle Revis, a Hall of Famer who is regarded

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as one of the best lockdown corners in league archives, is Whitehead's cousin. On the night that Revis was drafted by the Jets in 2007, Whitehead wore his hallowed Pitt practice jersey with gusto and as he gently placed his hand on the threads, Whitehead sensed his own destiny.

"When I was younger, I would see Darelle Revis and say, 'I want to do that,'" described Whitehead. "I wanted to play for Pitt, and I felt like I could. As you grow up and go to high school and go to college, you get more confident and see this is a possibility. I would say after my freshman year at Pitt I really felt like I could go to the NFL. It felt like it was touchable then and not just a big pipe dream."

All his life, Whitehead was mentally and physically preparing for his four quarters on Sunday. His uncle, Michael Sims Sr., served as his coach during little league and Sims engendered a commitment to excellence. On occasion, that meant players throwing up and crying after arduous drills. In true Pittsburgh fashion, from five years old to high school, Whitehead underwent bear crawls up a steep hill with full equipment on. The sand-basket walks and infamous coming-of-age workout plans plastered on the wall in the garage were legendary. Those relentless checklists, although vigorous, became the steppingstone that cultivated Whitehead's mentality.

Now in the NFL, Whitehead still follows the same regimen that his uncle configured in three-by-eight sets: 100 push-ups, 50 dips, 24 pull-ups, heavy jump rope reps and then for good measure, leg press with weights. The structured rundown – much like Whitehead's physicality on the field and the hard-nosed city surrounding him – is devoid of glitz and glamour. There is no finesse, just an unbridled dedication to one's craft.

"They would start in a three-point stance and then shoot up the hill," noted Sims, pointing to the hillside that became the antagonist in Whitehead's nightmares as a kid. "We had coaches on the hill and the kids would have to go around us and if they did not go around us, we would start over again. It was just grueling. The parents supported us. We were in the conference with the likes of Aliquippa and Beaver Falls, and I would say, 'The only way we are going to beat them is by training hard.'

"We had that special garage and people started learning about it. For the most part it would be sprints, bear crawls, high knees and shuffles on the side. We went all the way up the hill, and they had to do 10 the right way. Somedays we would start our practices here, all-day running drills. We were tough on them and that was the initial stage of the foundation. We would have a clipboard out and we would run the drills just like a college program. Our kids were smart, and they were advanced. We built a program and had a great coach in Mark Lyons."

In '04, Whitehead took a brief sabbatical from the game after repeatedly enduring hits to his Brett Favre chin strap. Whitehead played alongside his cousin, Michael, and in the BlackHawk scrimmage, he was pounded for the fourth time in the same spot and matter-of-factly yelled, 'I can't do this.'

Sitting on the couch in his parents' house, Whitehead lets out a contagious gut-laugh that fills the room as he dwells on the comical irony. Now, he takes pride in the very thing he once quit the game because of. Lifting weights caused the same inner turmoil. Whitehead used to despise picking up the rusted dumbbells two to three times a day in a perpetual mundane routine. But that consistent labor bred strength that has sustained him.

Whitehead's application of accountability and purpose, thorough and deliberate, is laced into every aspect of his life. For the athletic phenom, visualization catapulted him forward. His aunt, Jackie Sims, taped all of his youth football league games and Whitehead would critique himself to foster development. Each day after school, Whitehead would race home and delve into film before practice to prevent the same mistake from happening twice on the field. While most kids his age were occupying their time going to the movies or the mall, Whitehead was innately wired to exceed limits. From the Mighty Mites days to receiving Buccaneer footage on the team-distributed tablets, Whitehead follows the same philosophy in the NFL. That self-motivated approach – watch, visualize, adjust - spurred a prolific senior campaign at Central Valley.

As a playmaker on both sides of the football for CV, Whitehead totaled 1,933 rushing yards on 148 attempts (13.1 average), had 24 receptions for 471 yards and compiled 100 tackles and seven interceptions as a senior. In that final season, he added 35 touchdowns scoring five different ways. That preposterous stat line would have been impressive for the totality of a high school career but for a single season, extraordinary. Superlatives are not sufficive enough to characterize his impact for the Warriors. At running back, Whitehead dazzled with Barry Sanders-esque cutting ability, forcing missed tackles with mind-boggling maneuvers that somehow kept him upright. Lyons had to force himself to not give the ball to No.3 on every play. On defense, Whitehead brought the crowd to their feet with uninhibited seismic blows and staggering twitchiness in the secondary. With straight-line speed and a remarkable downhill prowess, Whitehead served as the all-encompassing gadget.

"I remember watching film on him," described Bucs' teammate Bryce Hall. "He was their key player and would do anything for them. On offense, they force-fed him the ball. On defense, he was the safety, the angel. He was the protector and covered a lot of people's mistakes at that level. In high school a lot of times, you put your best athlete in the secondary and that was him. He was the safety, but he would just always roam in the middle of the field making tackles. He was quick and he was strong. I played against him in college and when he was at Pitt, and they used him on offense, as well. He was that same kind of guy."

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His stellar production for the Warriors sparked attention nationally. Whitehead was rated as the top recruit in Pennsylvania coming out of high school and received numerous Power 5 offers. Ultimately, he chose to play at the University of Pittsburgh to be close to his inner circle in Western PA and represent the city that fueled his mania.

Back on the couch, minds adrift, Greg and Antonia candidly detail the mental war that transpires when their son takes the field on gameday. For them, worry assumes control, seizing their subconscious until the final whistle blows. Over the years, Antonia has never missed a game of his dating back to little league. She is Jordan's backbone, providing stability in an otherwise ever-changing nomadic profession. During his NFC Championship performance, she sat with a heated vest and heated gloves to make sure Jordan felt her presence in hostile territory. Greg watched on TV for that game, praying like usual that after every play, his son gets up. Each matchup, the ritual is the same for the Whiteheads. Mom does not eat due to nerves and clears her head for kickoff with attempted meditation. No pictures are taken. She means business and quickly finds her seat in the stands notoriously early to mentally prepare. If the crew – aunts, uncles, sisters, cousins, brother-in-laws – are not there at the predetermined and heavily investigated stadium departure time set by Antonia, then they find their own ride.

Dad on the other hand, paces. No tailgate. Eyes are glued on Jordan. No ostentatious branding that screams, 'Hello, I am Jordan Whitehead's father' to invite unruly taunting. Nothing out of the ordinary to stand out, but for the exception of the occasional yell, instigated by his spouse, of course. During Whitehead's high school playing days, Greg and Antonia made a mutual pact to sit separately in the Central Valley bleachers because each would rile up the other. One would say, 'He shouldn't hit him like that,' giving the other a bout of anxiety. For the respect of other spectators, the duo shifted their seating arrangement. Once Jordan arrived at Pitt, the pair had no choice but to try and act like normal, civilized parents in the crowd, which meant no more pacing for Greg. However, regardless of the venue, fretfulness remains crippling.

"Your focus is on your child and every play, he is hit, or he is taking a hit," both chime in. "All you are waiting for is to see him get up. Once he gets up, then it is, 'Ok, next one.'"

Greg and Antonia have been the constant force in his life, present at every stage from playgrounds to illustrious stadiums. As Jordan grew up on the field, they built a makeshift home from the sideline. They are his anchor, the pillar of strength upon which Jordan constructed his dream.

"They were there to see it every time," stated Pitt Head Coach Pat Narduzzi. "I just think he played better with his people there. I know his mom travels to Tampa and New York to watch him play. Some people just play better when they have family there or they know they are in attendance or watching. He is a family guy and plays for his family. A guy with a heart like he has, he has a big heart in that chest cavity of his and always plays well for his family."

For Whitehead, there is one person in particular whose advocacy imitates that of his own blood: Madison Aikens. During his senior year at Central Valley, he took a drama class to complete his schedule. What started out as an easy course requirement morphed into one of the most profound influences in his life. Madison, a die-hard football fanatic with cerebral palsy who was in the same class, brought infectious laughter into the curriculum. Her unfiltered commentary, motivational cheering and vivacious spirit impacted Whitehead on a daily basis. Their friendship blossomed into an enduring bond, propelling him forward. Before every game, Madison still sends Whitehead a heartening 'good luck' video that emboldens him.

"We were at the high school homecoming, and this woman just came up to me," Antonia recalls. "I had never spoken to her, did not know who she was, and she was crying. She said, 'I just want to thank you.' She told me about how Jordan and the football players were in the classroom with her daughter, and she brought her daughter up, who is in a wheelchair. Jordan had never told us about this, and she said, 'They embraced my daughter. She has cerebral palsy, and she is in their class. That is the only class she ever looks forward to. They come in and greet her and they make her day.' From there, Madison and Jordan and the Aikens family have become part of our family. Madison went to all the games, and she cannot go to high school games now with someone else wearing three. She yells, 'Hey, that is Jordan's number. They can't wear that.' They probably came to all the home Pitt games and came to some away games. She always says we have made their life more fulfilling just because Madison would not have something to look forward to if it was not for Jordan. They do so much for us because of who they are."

> **I REALLY FELT LIKE I COULD GO TO THE NFL. IT FELT LIKE IT WAS TOUCHABLE THEN AND NOT JUST A BIG PIPE DREAM.**
>
> JORDAN WHITEHEAD

Family, immediate and not, is Whitehead's 'why.' Each player has one - the inherent compass that beckons them to reach unimagined heights. Every time the jersey slides on top of his pads and his hands feel the letterhead that protrudes ever-so-slightly, W-H-I-T-E-H-E-A-D, he is reminded of his roots and the close-knit community that shaped his resolute endurance.

Inside his parents' condo in Monaca, Whitehead befittingly sits between his mom and dad on the black leather sofa. He watches and admires as they provide anecdotes, narrating his life at various stages. As the term box safety hangs in the air, Whitehead returns to the pivot point.

After committing to the University of Pittsburgh, Whitehead made a call to Narduzzi mid-summer that re-routed his course.

"So, the story was, he was playing corner, and I think he can still play corner," described Narduzzi. "I think he just wanted instant success, so it was in the middle of the summer in July. He called me and asked if he could switch to safety. I said, 'I don't care where you play Jordan. You can play at linebacker.' It was him who called me. I think he can be an All-Pro corner and has the athleticism to play both, but he called me and wanted to make that move."

From Whitehead's vantage point, he remembers getting beat by a go-ball that prompted the move – the barometer of a consummate competitor. He fit the mold of a safety and seamlessly navigated the transition in the Panthers' secondary, evidenced by a play made in the first preseason exhibition.

Narduzzi, who has seen a revolving door of talented individuals come and go through the program, unexpectantly and instantaneously managed to summon the moment that he realized Whitehead would not only be NFL bound but would break the status quo.

"The ball was on the hash, and I just remember this guy in our first scrimmage, he comes flying across the field. I thought, 'Holy cow. This guy is the real deal. He can go.' It was his rookie year that I knew from that first scrimmage. He was going from one side of the field to the other. He was not supposed to make that play but went across and made the play on the other side of the field."

For the Panthers, Whitehead became a fixture on defense. He started immediately as a freshman, resulting in consensus freshman All-American honors. Whitehead put up a decorated debut season in which he was named the ACC Rookie of the Year and Defensive Rookie of the Year by the Atlantic Coast Sports Media Association (ACSMA). In 2015, he led Pitt with 109 tackles – the most by a true freshman in school history - six for loss, an interception, six pass breakups and a fumble return for a touchdown. He earned second-team All-ACC recognition in 2016 and covered a lot of ground when active for the Panthers.

Whether chewing up yards as a rusher following lethal jump-cuts or wreaking havoc in the backfield, Whitehead did not aim to keep his jersey clean.

Instead, as the Panthers' starting strong safety and do-it-all chess piece, he galvanized the unit with tantalizing play. He delivered unyielding hits, personifying the very essence of football's brute nature and the mentality needed to succeed between the hashes. Before he gave him reps at tailback, Narduzzi wanted Whitehead to master the safety position and the nuances of quarters coverage first, which he did at a record pace, once again setting an unattainable precedent. He was given the ball on offense and seized the opportunity against Notre Dame, subsequently scoring two touchdowns like clockwork.

Whitehead's experience as a two-way player and his understanding of the intricacies that the running back position entails translates to his diagnosis on defense. He sees the game differently than most, possessing an inimitable feel for a rusher's course, cut-backs, proper angles of pursuit and blocking assignments. Each enhances his game, sharpening his pre-snap processing to fire downhill.

"If they are an aggressive running back, I have to use a different strategy in tackling them," Whitehead explains. "I was always a little running back, but I was strong, and I couldn't take the hits on full so I would try and if they were going to tackle me high, I had to learn how to take the hit or spin out of the tackle. So, if they are a big running back, you have to learn how to get their legs down. But now, being on the other side, it is really a feel thing for the running back or the linemen or reads and run block reads and them firing off the ball or to just pop straight up. It helps with that, and it also helps with angles. If a running back and you see a hole, if you have the A-gap but the running back in the B-gap is wide open, the running back is going to choose the B-gap so as a safety, most guys would just take their gap and try to get over but just being a savvy football player, you know that running back is probably going to cut back to that B-gap. So, you slow down and get to the gap without getting blocked."

Narduzzi, a touted defensive guru, is a perfectionist by nature. He places high expectations on his defensive units but entrusted Whitehead to make a call every time he was positioned in the secondary. He gave Whitehead the opportunity to make checks with the linebacker and corner placed on his side of the field. Whitehead eagerly took advantage of the responsibility, showcasing an advanced football IQ. At five-foot-ten, 198 pounds, Whitehead had to achieve near textbook technique and create unorthodox methods to succeed near the line of scrimmage. He was never the biggest safety, but hit harder than the vast majority, showing no signs of hesitation. The reason a heralded defensive mind put the weight of his defense on the shoulders of a 20-year-old kid from Beaver County, Pennsylvania in crunch time is because he saw one overarching thing: greatness.

In 2018, the pinnacle moment arrived. The NFL came knocking. The Buccaneers selected Whitehead in the fourth round of the draft. During his first four-year span in Tampa Bay, Whitehead became the enforcer. He played the prototypical box safety/strong safety role, filling a variety of responsibilities in Todd Bowles' complex defense. In addition to playing the run near the line of scrimmage, Whitehead was used to cover tight ends in the flat and was flexed out on 'Z' receivers. Although he was considered 'undersized' by NFL safety standards, he was unflinching at the point of contact. While some players shy away from contact to prevent injury, Whitehead welcomes it. Whitehead's jarring thuds changed the momentum of games and energized the franchise.

"He is like a heavyweight boxer," Bucs' Safeties Coach Nick Rapone expresses. "He is going to come in and he is not going to dance around. He is going to throw punches, so when he comes in to tackle you, he is coming in full speed. That is how he sets the tone. He could have played in the 70s, 80s, or 90s."

Both Rapone and (then) Defensive Coordinator Todd Bowles played an integral role in spearheading Whitehead's development during the initial stage of his pro career. During the 2020 COVID season, Bowles taught Whitehead how to constructively break down film and the nuances to emphasize. Bowles, a defensive mastermind known for his exotic pressure packages and a master gameplan that made the Chiefs' offensive onslaught mortal in Super Bowl LV, would dissect opposing offenses. From fire zones to Cover Three and Cover Four, Bowles utilizes a variety of coverages to keep offenses off-kilter, which subsequently increases each player's workload. Rapone harps on fundamentals – analyzing every

possible run read and alignment, along with the art of reading the quarterback. The tandem stimulated mental growth for Whitehead.

"I did not know much about studying ball and studying route combinations and Coach Bowles taught me a lot with all of that," Whitehead exclaimed. "He is one of the smartest coaches that I have been around. Then, Rapone is very technical. They are different but they balance one another. Rapone taught me every run block that you need to know, and he would dive into the defense, what we are doing. Then, Coach Bowles does a great job of telling you what the offense is going to do.

"After you leave here, you know every defense. Rapone taught me to read the line so you can tell if it is a run or pass quicker, and we do that drill every day at the start of practice with Rapone on that because it is so important to the safeties in the defense. Coach Bowles calls the call and then he tells you why. So, if I hear a call, I know the reason behind it. It is going to be for one or two things and that raises your antenna and makes you play faster. Being somewhere else and then coming back, it slowed everything down. I got to bring what I learned here over there [Jets]. I feel like I know the game even more now."

Ahead of the 2022 season, Whitehead signed a two-year deal with the New York Jets in free agency. While in New York, he sought to destigmatize his game from the restrictive 'box safety' label he heard reference to during free agency. Whitehead played in a different scheme with the Jets and was often placed in the post, contradictory to his home near the line of scrimmage in Tampa Bay. In the new role, Whitehead played in and started all 34 of the team's games during that two-year stretch. He amassed 186 tackles during that span along with six interceptions and 17 passes defensed, including career-highs in interceptions (four) and tackles (97) in 2023.

In New York, Whitehead displayed his range, often sitting back in Cover Four. His 321 and 286 snaps in pass coverage in 2022 and 2023 were the two highest totals of his career (blitzed 1%). He shattered the preconceived barriers and paved his own path as a multi-faceted weapon. Whitehead silenced the outside narrative and bet on himself.

The evidence arrived in the form of a seemingly unconquerable feat against the Buffalo Bills in Week One. Whitehead intercepted Josh Allen, a top-five quarterback in the NFL, not once, not twice, but three times. A blend of two conflicting schemes attributed to the rare accomplishment. On the first two picks, Whitehead was lined up in the post and tracked the ball downfield, preventing touchdowns. On the third, Whitehead jumped the corner route and came away with the pigskin. What was ingrained with the Jets – ball drills and preventing the big play over the top – contributed to the first two interceptions. What he learned from Bowles' aggressive philosophy featuring safeties working the over and corner routes during practice until it becomes ingrained in coverage, spurred the third.

"A lot of what he was able to accomplish with the Jets was because of what was instilled in him with the Bucs," noted teammate Bryce Hall. "We would see him make these interesting plays in practice. Now, I come here, I see how we play and now I understand because of the system here in Tampa. We ran like four coverages in New York, and we were going to master those. Here, we run like 15. I think what was good for him in New York was that he got to sharpen those four things. He polished his game and the technique with what he played in getting to the post a little bit and playing man coverage and understanding the nuances and beaters in that. Then, in that defense, you would see the same thing and it would become simplified. You would know what they were going to do, and you could play fast. In New York, the assignment was easy, so you were looking at the offense and diagnosing what they were doing and playing fast. He became more aware of certain looks and the nuances of covering. Now, he can take that to the Bucs with knowing weaknesses."

> "THIS GUY IS THE REAL DEAL. HE CAN GO."
>
> PAT NARDUZZI

While with the Jets, Whitehead distanced himself from the baseless parameters placed on his game, proving his worth as a complete safety that checks every box. That same determined mindset that Whitehead used as fuel on the field became the antidote that prevailed in his life amidst unfathomable tragedy. In 2022, the crossroads arrived on October 31; a day that will forever be imprinted on Whitehead's mind, but one he would do anything to forget.

"Will you hurry up and get home?"

"Are you going to be home?"

"You need to get home."

On the way to the mall – a far distance from his residence in New York – Whitehead's phone lit up like a Christmas tree in the backseat of the car, as texts from his father flooded the screen of his phone. A gnawing sense of dread began to fill his stomach and Whitehead rerouted the driver towards home. Each mile marker felt like an eternity, waiting for the inevitable to strike. Before the life-changing words were uttered, Whitehead sank into the seat and stared blankly out the window. Someway, he already knew the numbing devastation that had occurred. He internalized the unimaginable horror, still pleading with God for it not to be true. Thirty seconds later, his dad called.

"Just come home," Greg managed to say. "Noah passed."

Whitehead froze, too stunned to move, unable to fathom the words still ringing in his ear.

"This has to be a joke," Whitehead said to himself. "There is no way."

Over 300 miles away on the 7100 block of Hermitage Street, Whitehead's brother, Noah Wilkerson, was shot and killed inside a vehicle and was pronounced dead at the scene. In a single instant, Whitehead's life shifted on its axis.

He arrived back at the house, not ready to face reality. As the words pierced again and the disillusion faded, Whitehead sat in silence. He went upstairs to be isolated and drifted through the minutes as if living someone else's torment. Whitehead attempted to make sense of what happened, knowing the answers would likely never come. Introversion became his initial coping mechanism, and, in that space, Whitehead's mind unraveled as vivid memories and emotions consumed him. Death still seemed incomprehensible.

Back in the dimly-lit room – an encapsulation of the solemn topic – the word "legacy" resonates. Whitehead lets out a devilish grin as Noah's contagious smile, comically awkward stretches and hype speeches play in his mind. Noah and Jordan both morphed into a replica of their dad, Greg, in both personality and communication. All were notorious procrastinators, responding to texts the next day or calls days after the fact, which only infuriates Antonia. Leaning on the desk, Whitehead exudes strength, presenting the inverse of a man who has endured an unquantifiable loss. After contemplation, Whitehead begins to try and quantify the immeasurable impact of his late brother.

"I always think back to playing sports with him," Whitehead detailed. "It is definitely going to be hard now without him, especially Halloween. This is how it is now. The life he lived, most people would judge or say, 'Oh, that is how he is, because of the lifestyle. But I would say he is more how I am. He was just happy all the time and was respectful. He loved me and always talked about me. People hated him because he would always brag, 'Oh my brother is about to get a pick this game,' and was always hyping me up, even if I played bad. He was my hype man, and I will always have the video of him after the Steelers game saved. He was there in attendance, and I got two picks that game. I have never seen him so hyped for me, and I still watch that video of him

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celebrating all the time. That is how I want to think of him – in that moment. Even his friends always said he brightened up the room no matter the situation and that is what I always think about."

The weeks after Noah's death proved to be the most formative of days as the Whitehead family began the process of acceptance and absorption. The sole act of grieving requires perseverance of the acutest kind. In contrast to sports, it poses a duality. In grief, there is not a finish line to cross. Instead, there is an alteration of self, a new definition of family dynamic and reawakened outlook on life. It is a silent, overwhelming weight that is carried daily by affected loved ones. There is no rubric to mourning. Loss is ironic because it stays, grasping its host with a stranglehold. Grief is the price one pays for experiencing love – why its devastating presence is always felt, even, unconsciously. Time heals but grief is an avalanche that comes unexpectantly, without reserve, and sweeps victims off their feet. The external world moves on, but for Whitehead, Noah's legacy emboldens him. In escaping down memory lane, in the vividness of dreams, or in the mannerisms of Noah's children, Whitehead finds his brother and a sense of peace surrounds him. Although frozen in time, those mental recollections provide beauty amidst the breaking.

"We did not live together when we were younger," said Whitehead. "Noah lived in Pittsburgh, and I lived outside in Aliquippa. We got to see each other all the time and then when I got older and went to college at Pitt, I was able to be around him a lot more. When I got to the league, he was around supporting me. So, our bond grew as we got older, and it was the same with my sister. My bond grew with her as we got older and now, I am grateful that we still have each other. It is a blessing because it made me closer to her. Life happens. We did as much as we could to help Noah and get him out of certain situations. Now, I appreciate my family and my parents more, along with my dad. He is more aware, and we now have an outlet to open up. We live for each other."

The Whitehead family prioritizes intentionality, making a concerted effort to check in on one another, fashioning an unbreakable connection. From a family cruise, road trips, to a father-son bonding experience at a Chris Brown concert, the Whiteheads cherish time spent together.

Rather than dwelling on anger or the crippling path of 'what if,' he makes a daily choice to focus on the positive, trusting his struggle. Now, gearing up to take the field for his encore with the Buccaneers, Whitehead is guided by a newfound sense of purpose. During the increased down time that accompanies an NFL offseason, sleeplessness and depression can become suffocating. Football has always been a sanctuary for Whitehead – a place to unwind and work off suppressed stress and anxiety. In recent years through soul searching, he has developed another safe haven to unpack unvarnished thoughts: therapy.

"It can be hard," admitted Whitehead. "The first day we started OTAs, it felt so good just to play football and it was a stress reliever. You don't think about anything besides what is going on the football field. Not getting beat. In the offseason you have time and have to find things to help you cope with your thoughts and everything. I can do yoga or talk to a therapist. A therapist goes a long way, and it is helpful to get your thoughts across to someone who is unbiased – it helps me."

Back on the field at Central Valley as the throng of camp attendees clears out, Whitehead remains, enraptured by the hard-nosed aura surrounding him. His red Balenciaga Phantom sneakers morph into the grass and Whitehead's eyes dance as he motions through the art of pursuit angles.

Long stride.

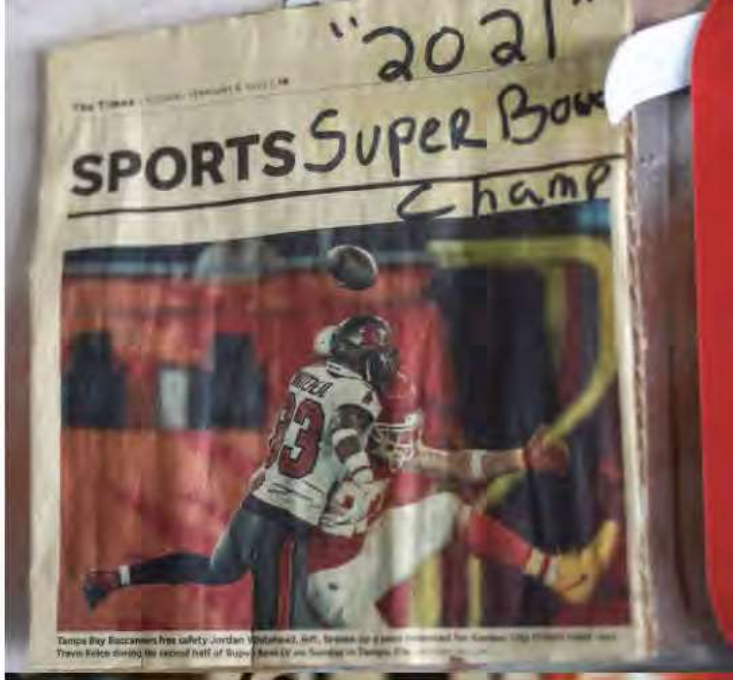
Short stride.

Chop chop.

Finish.

He has performed the tackling maneuver so many times it has become second nature. However, today, the routine walk-through signifies a paradigm shift. In a juxtaposition from his career introduction to now, Whitehead will soon sport another digit in red and pewter for the Buccaneers. The chapter closes on 33 and a new era begins as the page flips in Tampa Bay. In 2024, Whitehead will resurrect the numeral he wore in high school – 3, intertwining the past and present. Whitehead, a linchpin of the Bucs' defense, is grit personified. As he turns to exit, Whitehead flashes his patented smile, daydreaming of his next teeth-rattling hit.

A vintage player in the modern era.



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CHASE

McLAUGHLIN

#4

K

Height: 6'0

Weight: 190

College: ILLINOIS

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JAKE

CAMARDA

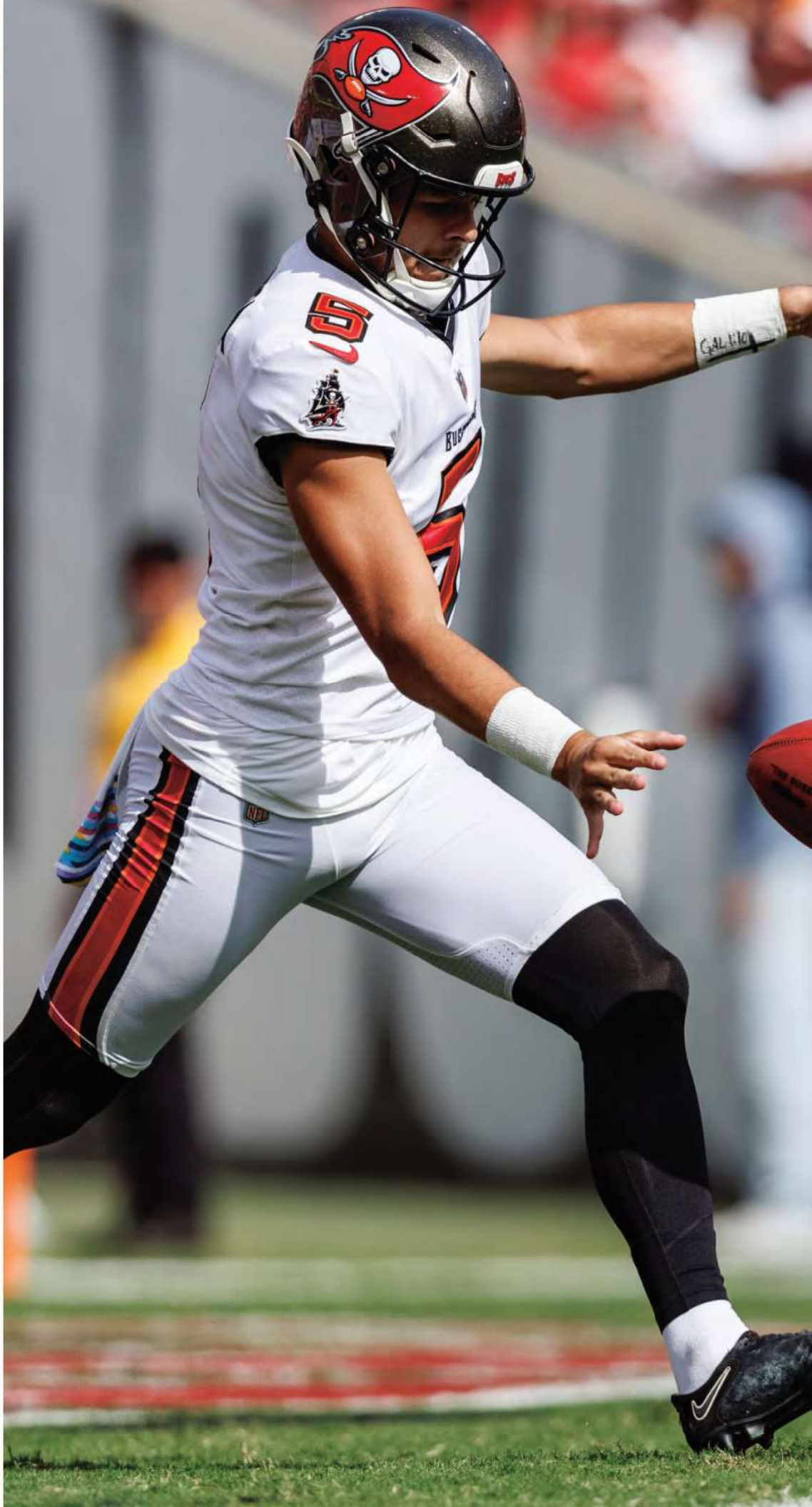
#5

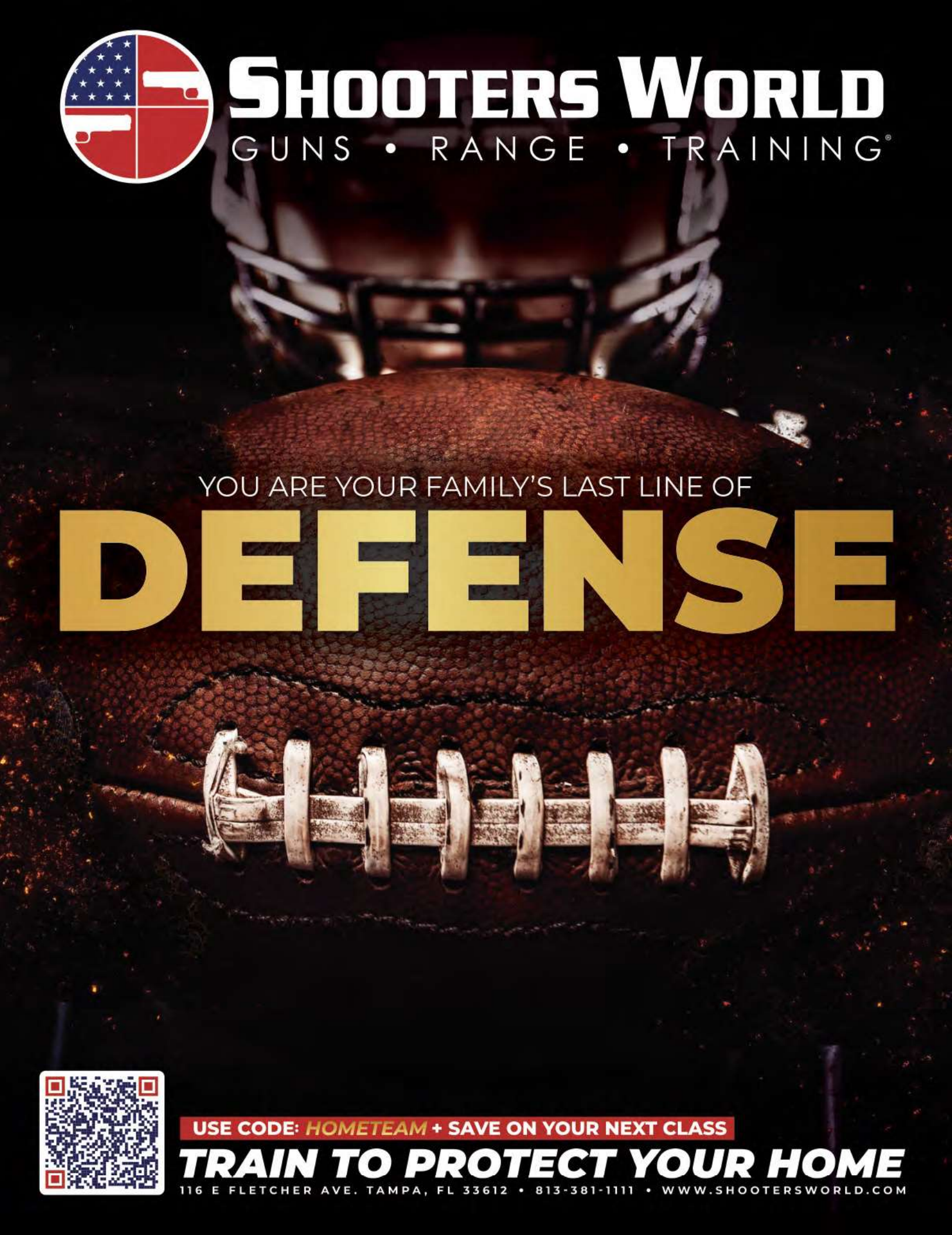
P

Height: **6'1**

Weight: **193**

College: **GEORGIA**

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BAKER MAYFIELD

#6

QB

Height: **6'1**

Weight: **215**

College: **OKLAHOMA**

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#8

LB

Height: **6'0**

Weight: **230**

College: **PITTSBURGH**

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JOE TRYON-SHOYINKA

#9

OLB

Height: **6'5**

Weight: **259**

College: **WASHINGTON**

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TREY PALMER

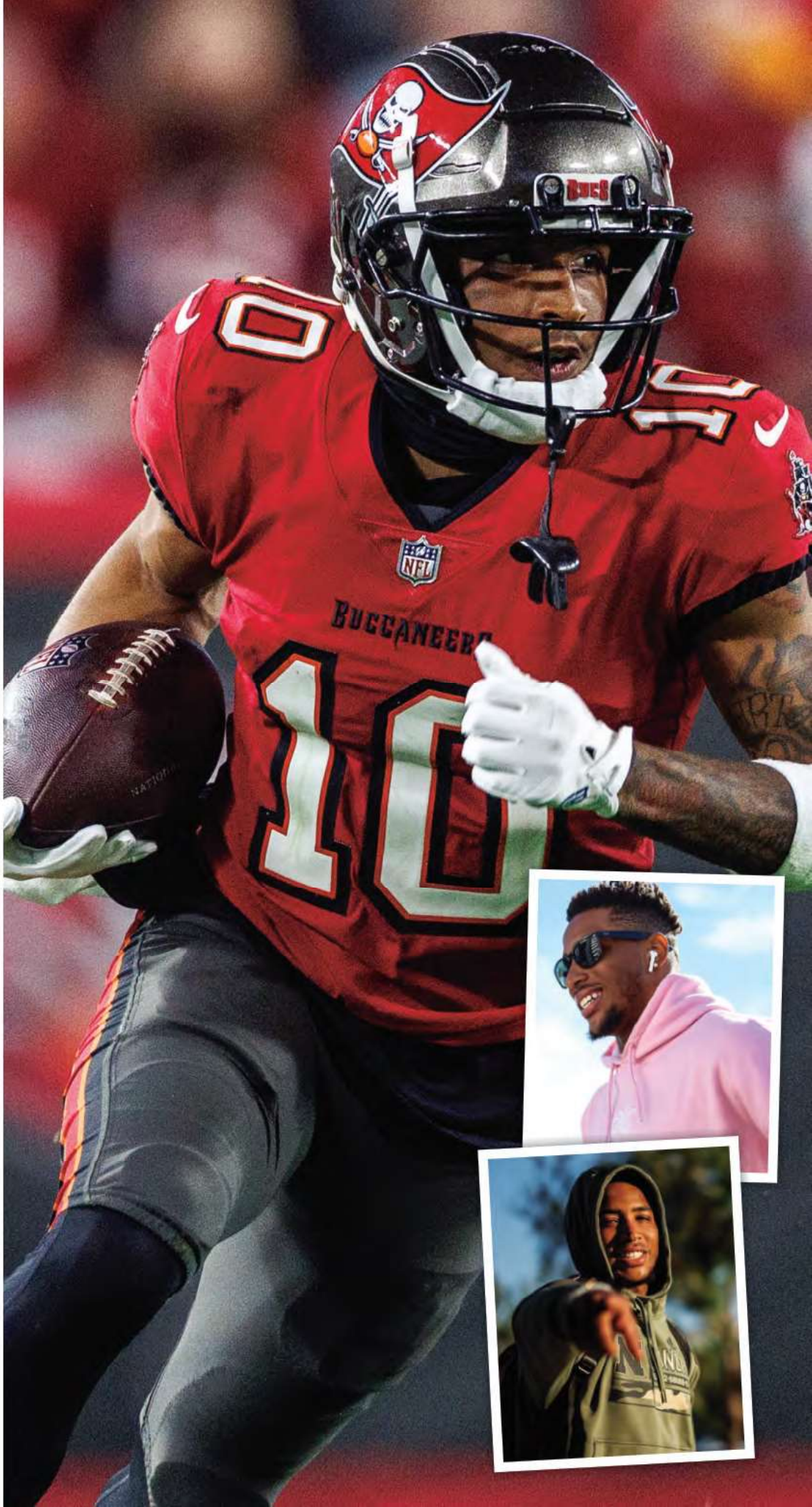
#10

WR

Height: **6'1**

Weight: **190**

College: **NEBRASKA**



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JOHN WOLFORD

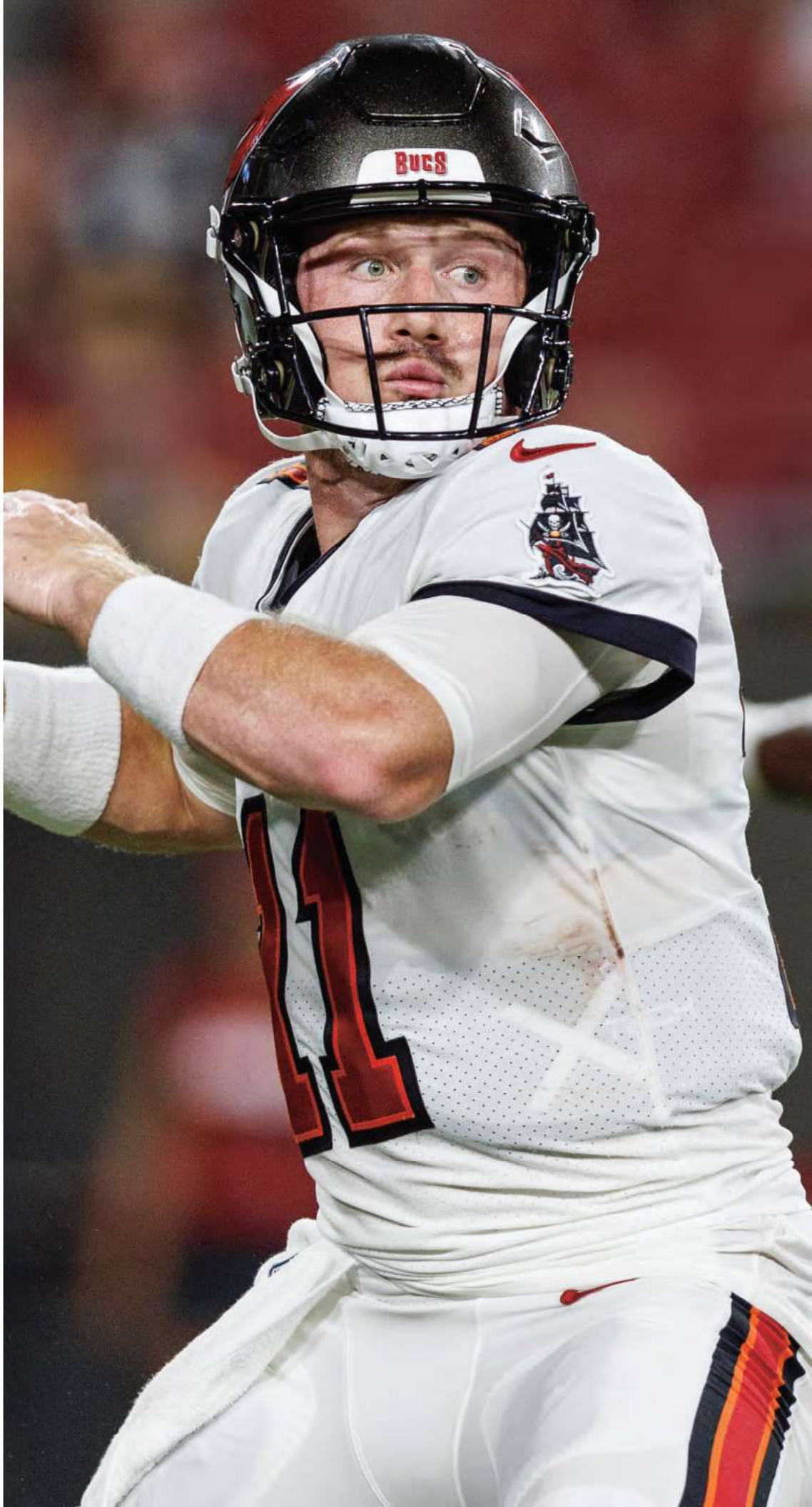
#11

QB

Height: **6'1**

Weight: **218**

College: **WAKE FORREST**



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CARAMEL BIG CUP

MIKE EVANS

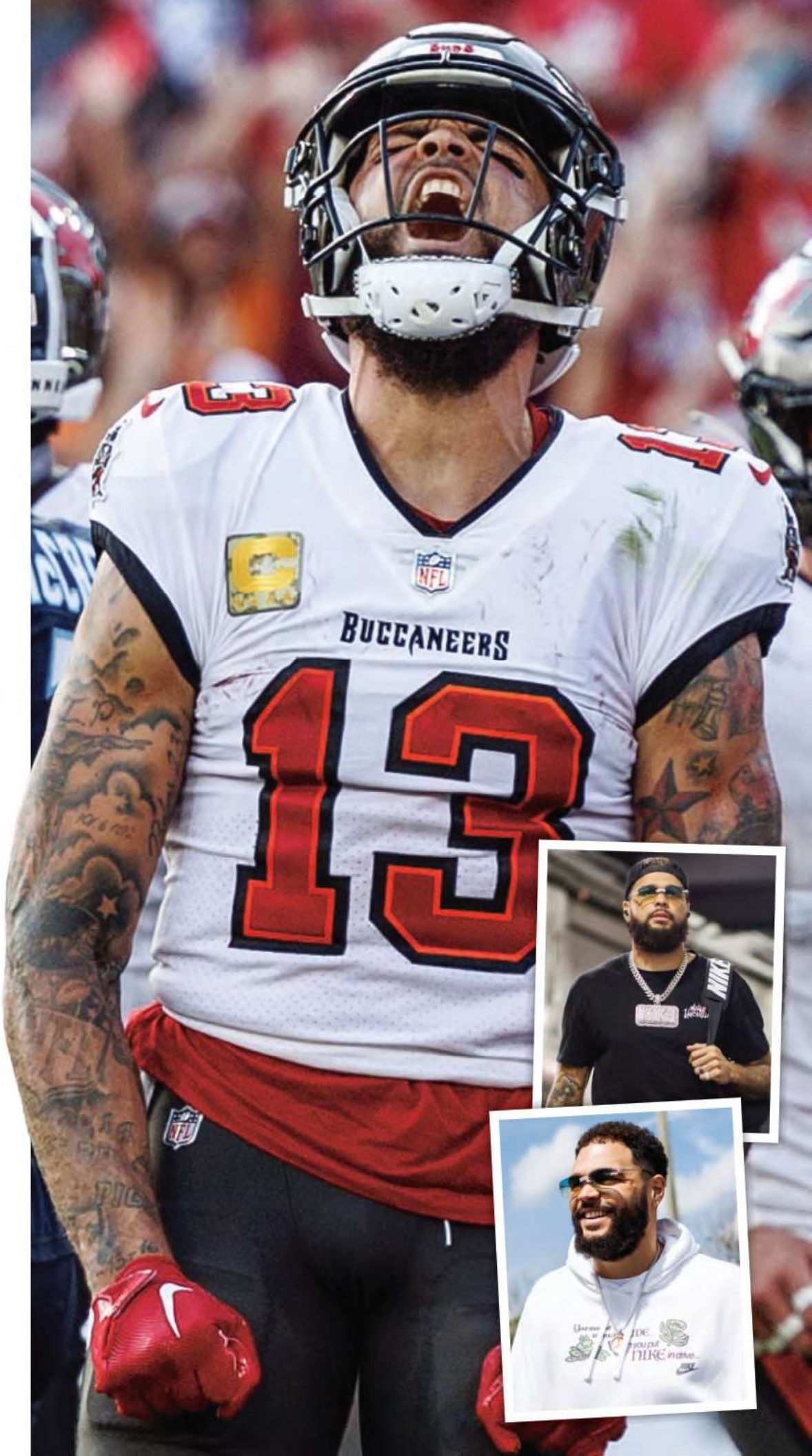
#13

WR

Height: **6'5**

Weight: **231**

College: **TEXAS A&M**



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CHRIS GODWIN

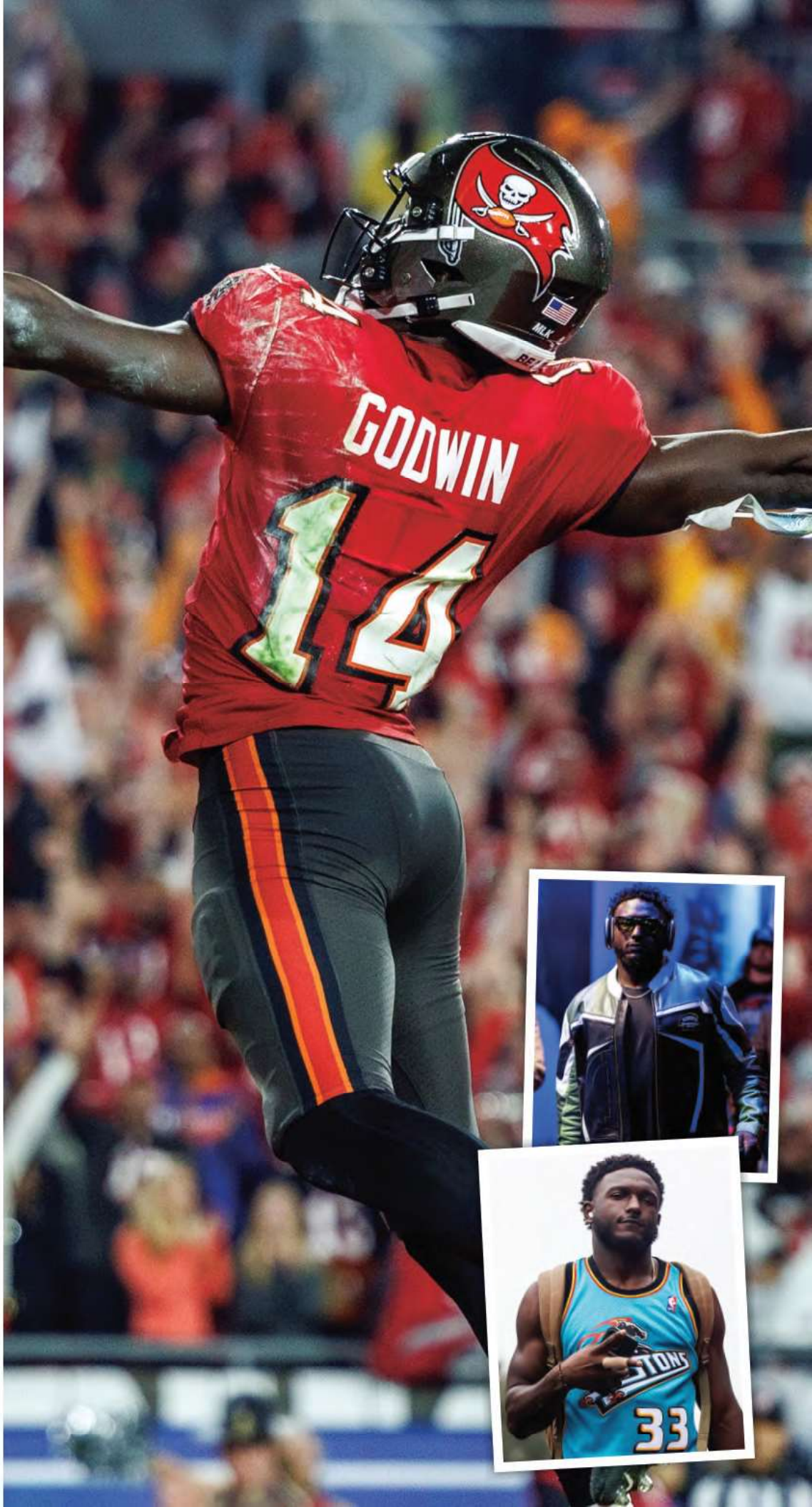
#14

WR

Height: **6'1**

Weight: **209**

College: **PENN STATE**



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CHASE

EDMONDS

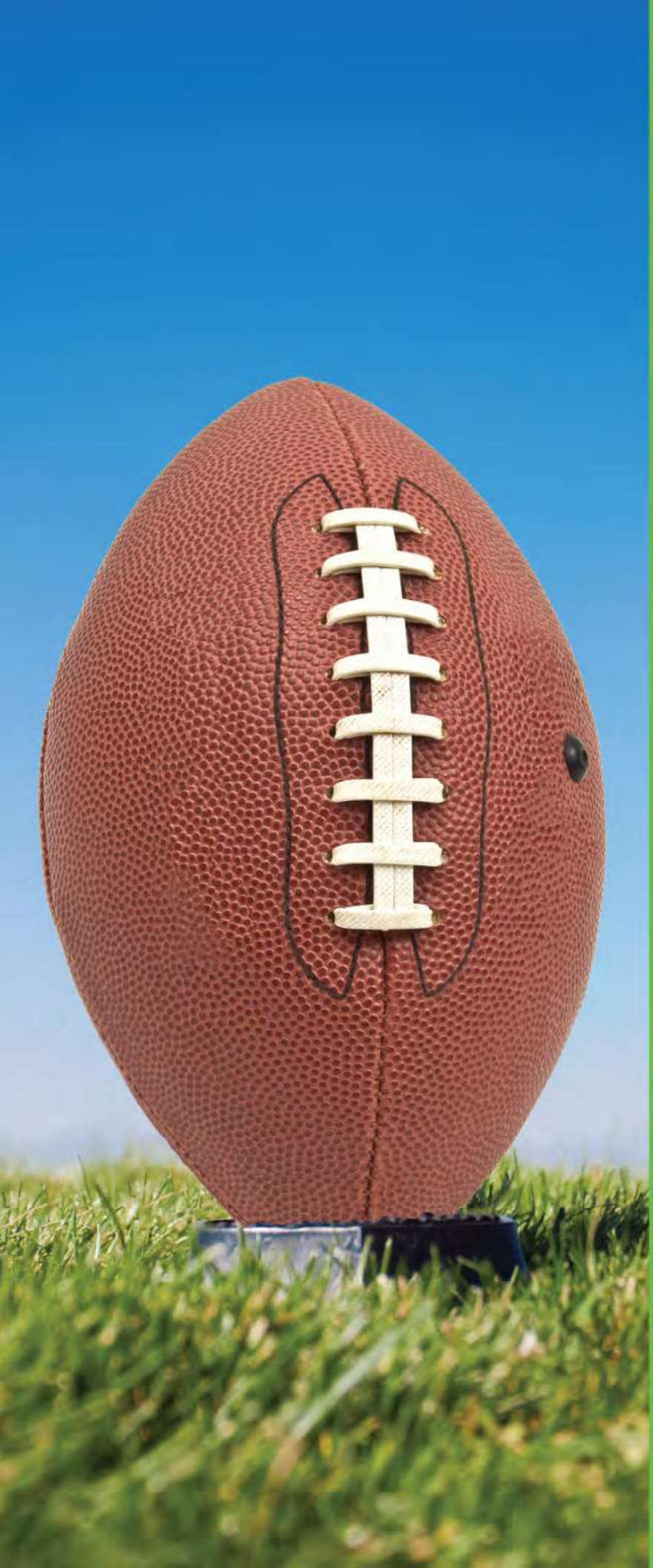
#22

RB

Height: **5'9**

Weight: **201**

College: **FORDHAM**



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STERLING

SHEPARD

#25

WR

Height: **5'10**

Weight: **198**

College: **OKLAHOMA**

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ZYON McCOLLUM

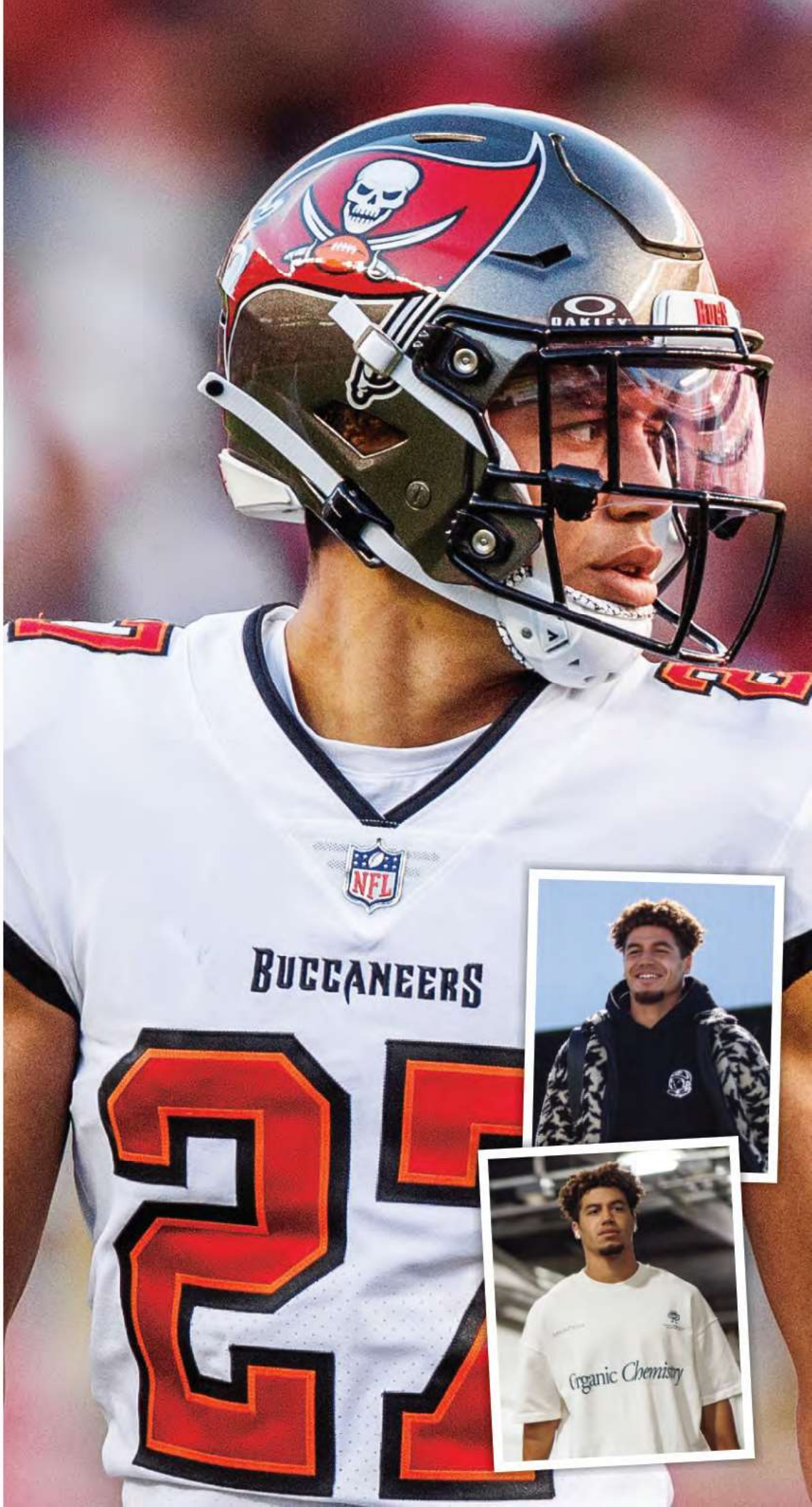
#27

CB

Height: **6'2**

Weight: **199**

College: **SAM HOUSTON STATE**



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CHRISTIAN

IZIEN

#29

S

Height: 5'10

Weight: 200

College: RUTGERS

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ANTOINE WINFIELD JR.

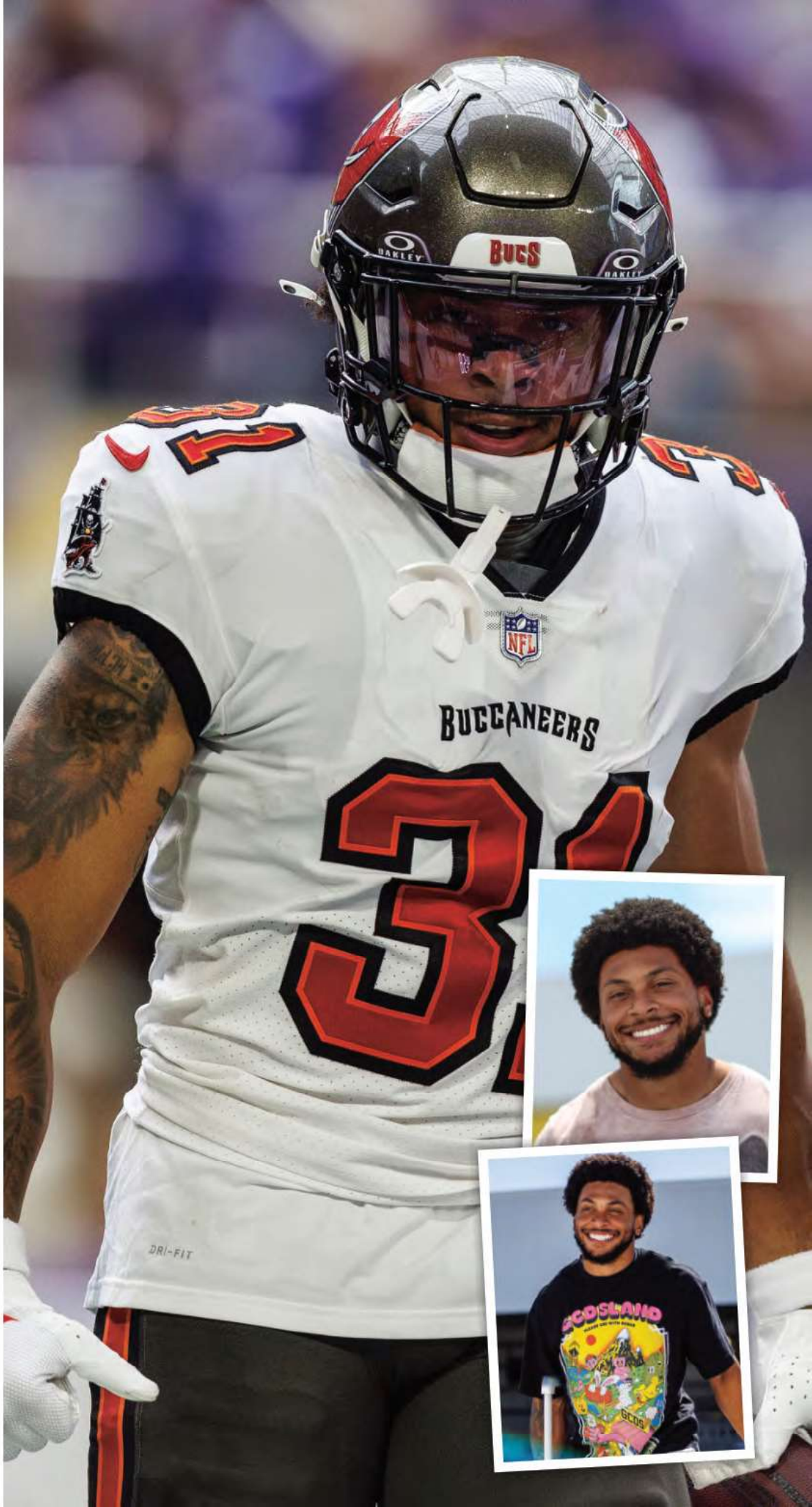
#31

S

Height: 5'9

Weight: 203

College: MINNESOTA



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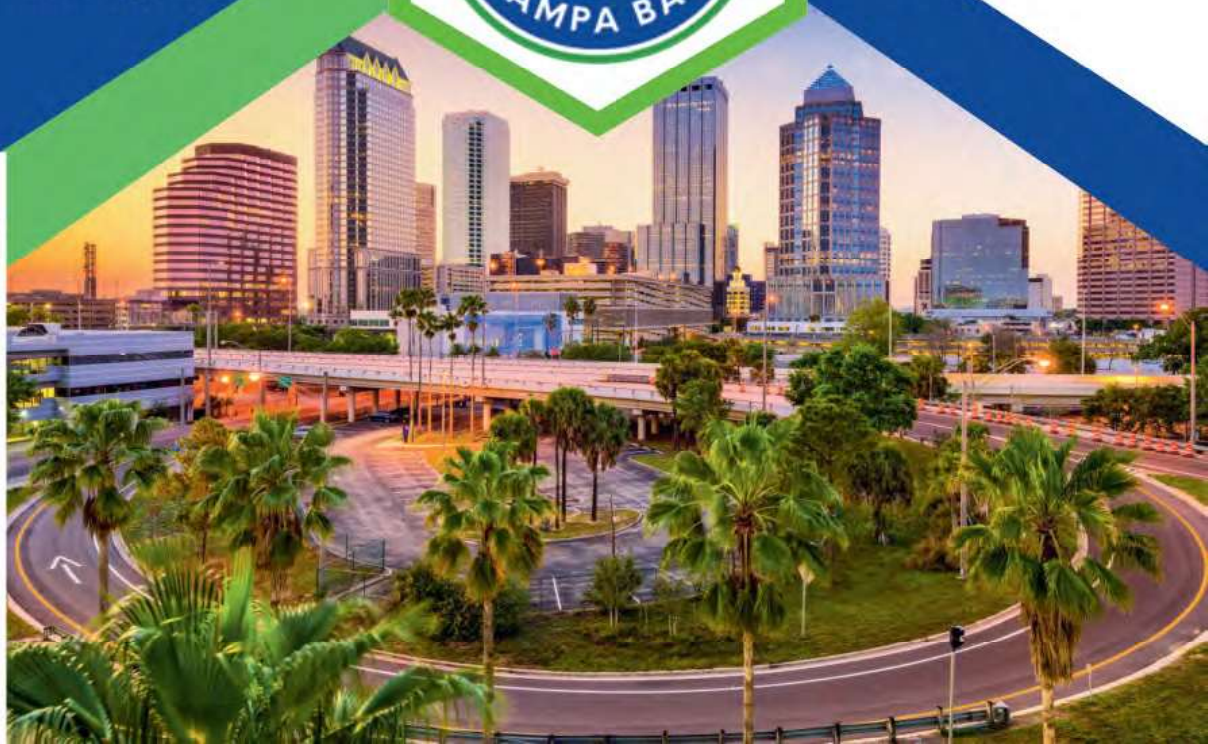

JOSH HAYES

#32

DB

Height: **6'0**

Weight: **190**

College: **KANSAS STATE**

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dreams
of being a veterinarian.
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HALL

#34

CB

Height: **6'1**

Weight: **202**

College: **VIRGINIA**

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JAMEL DEAN

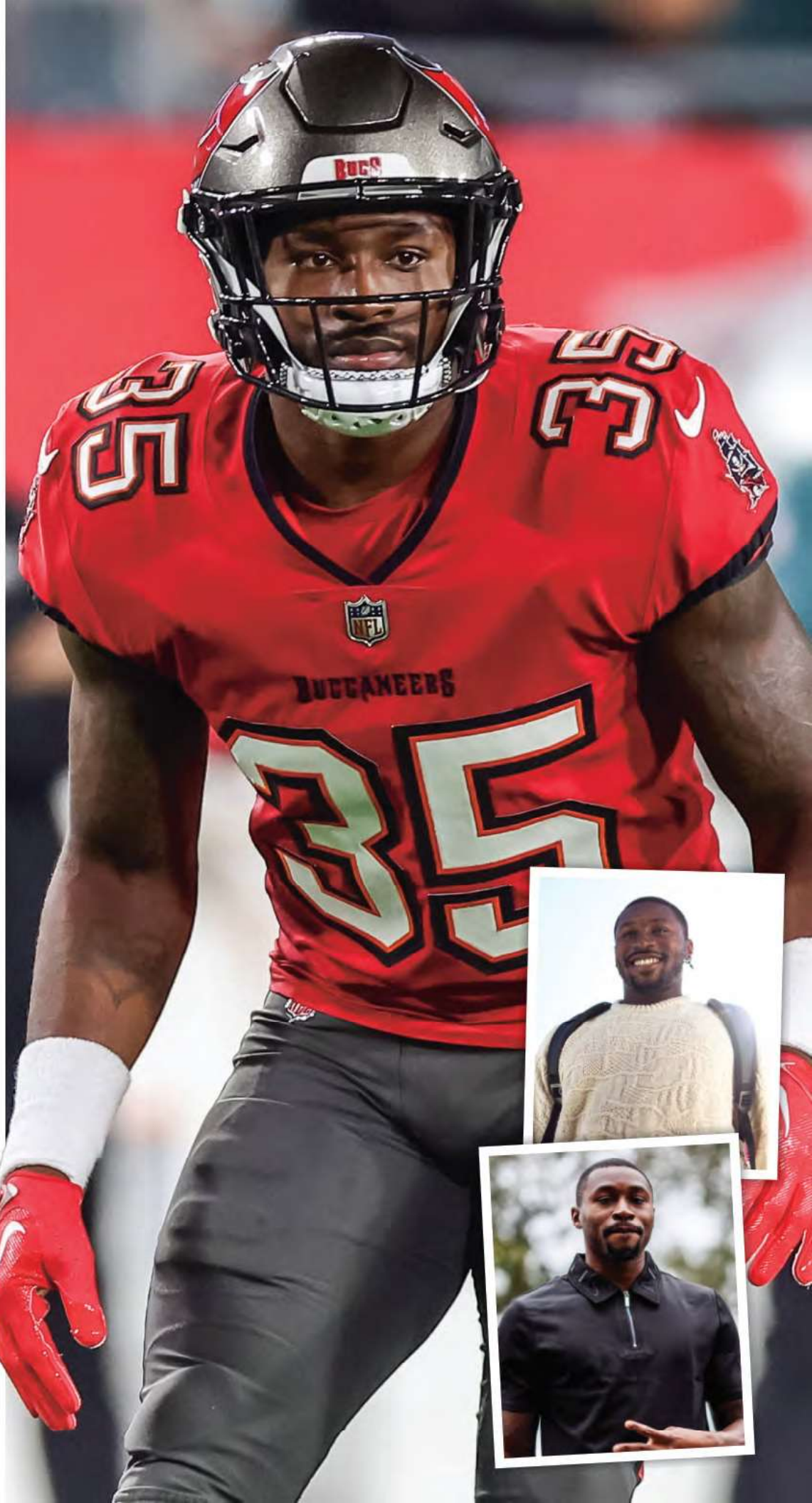
#35

CB

Height: **6'1**

Weight: **206**

College: **AUBURN**



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TAVIERRE

THOMAS

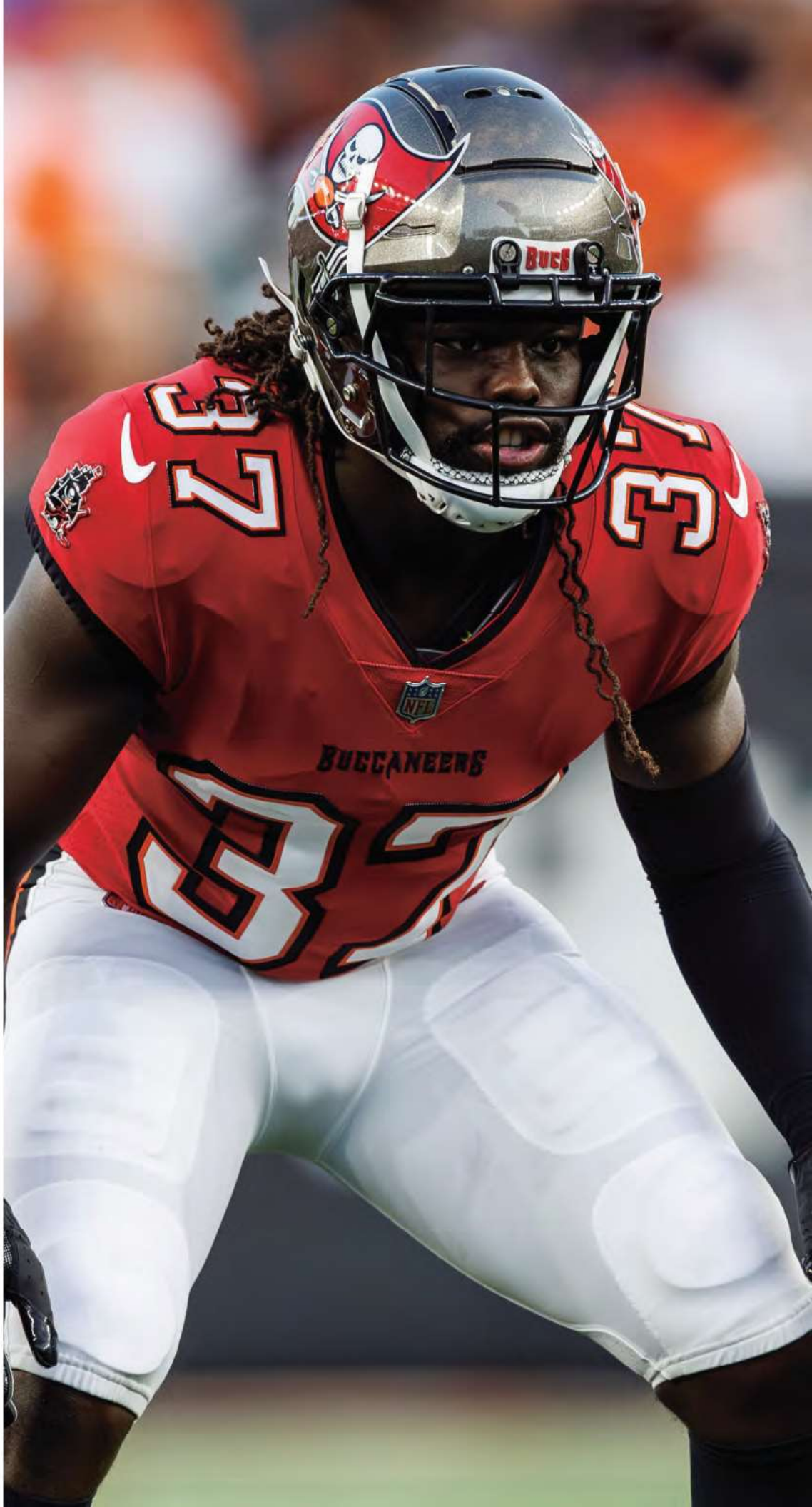
#37

CB

Height: **5'10**

Weight: **205**

College: **FERRIS STATE**



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KO KIEFT

#41

TE

Height: **6'5**

Weight: **265**

College: **MINNESOTA**

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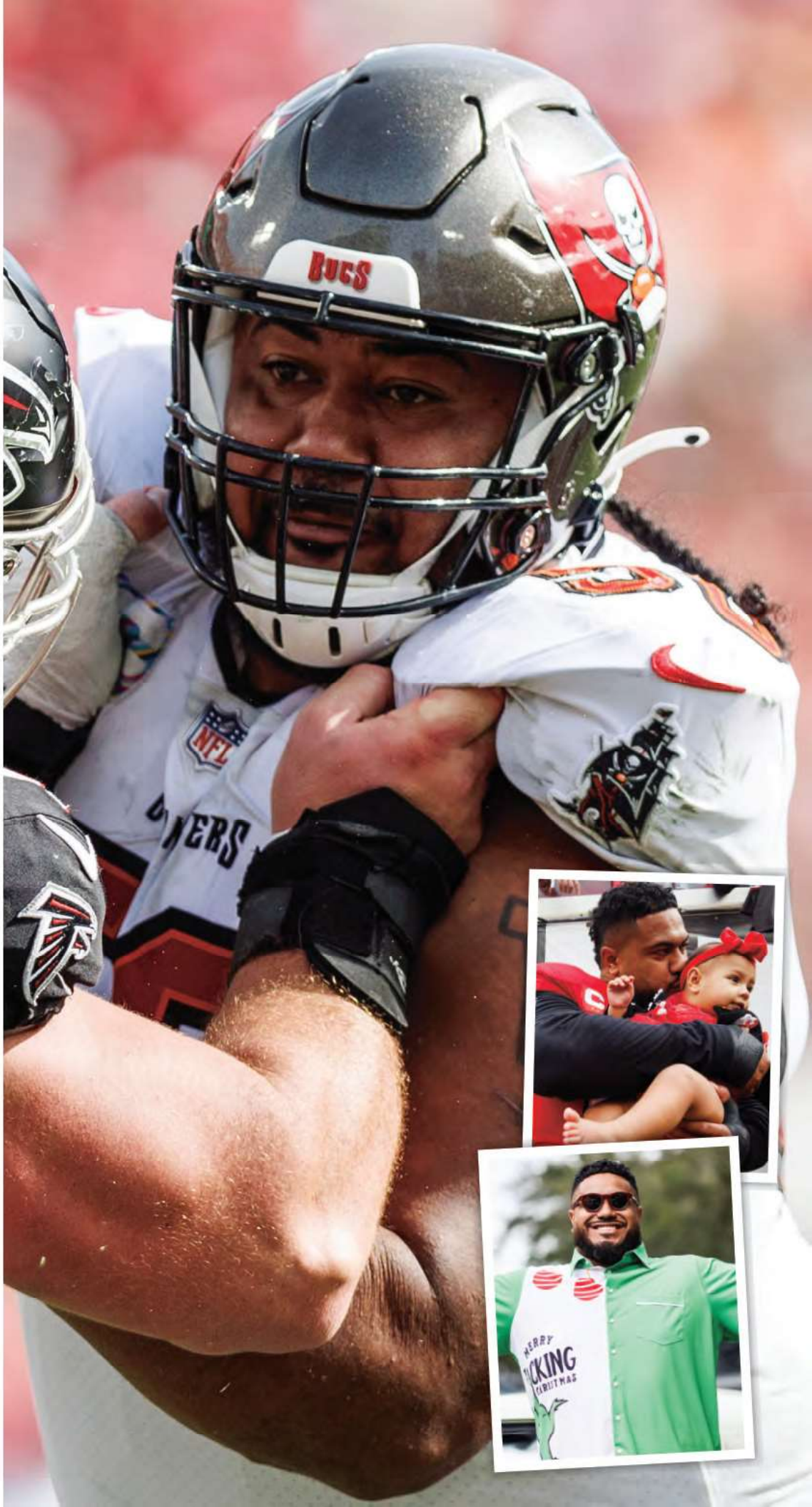

VITA VEA

#50

NT

Height: **6'4**

Weight: **347**

College: **WASHINGTON**

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J.J. RUSSELL

#51

LB

Height: **6'1**

Weight: **225**

College: **MEMPHIS**

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K.J. BRITT

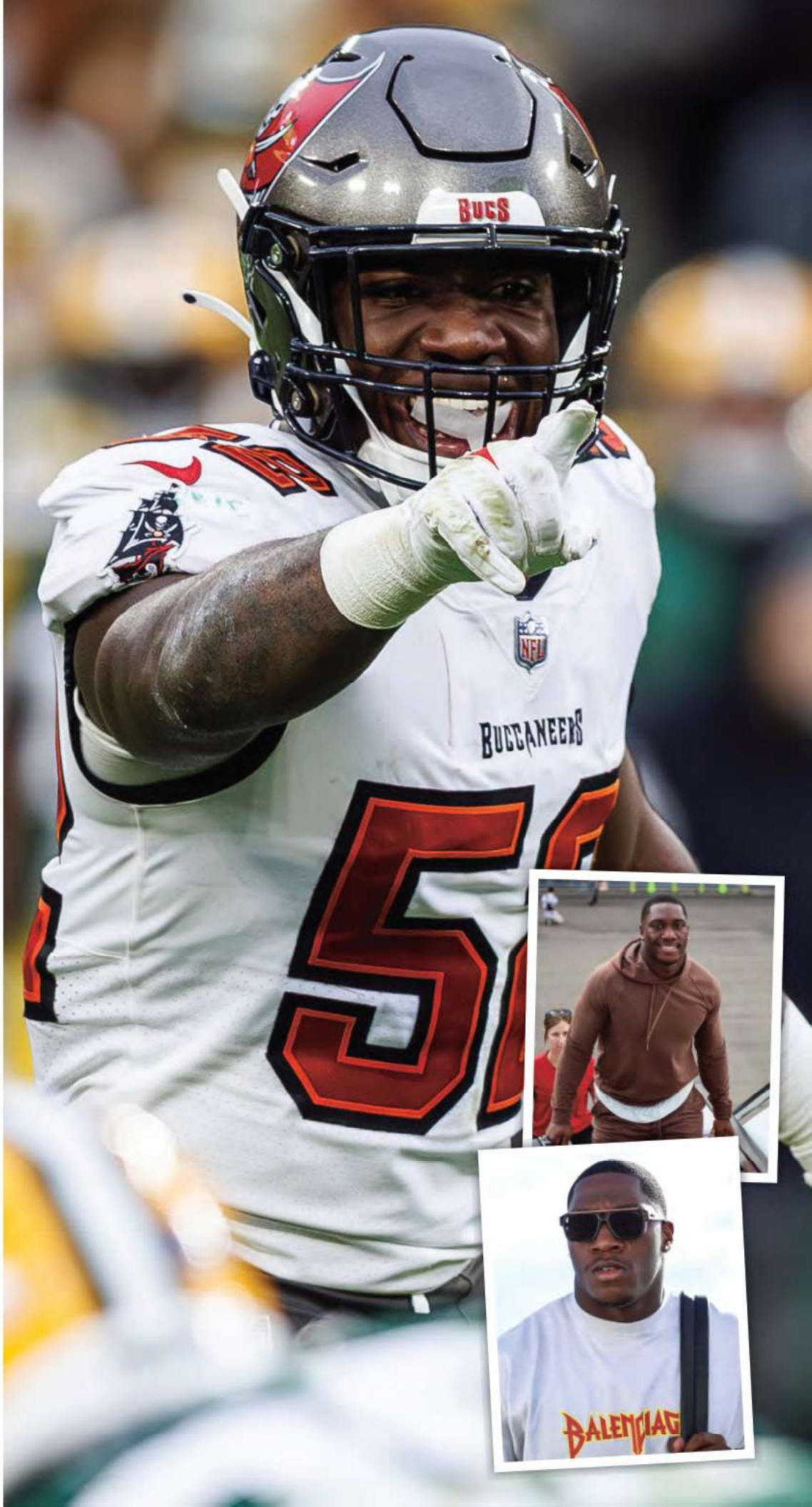
#52

LB

Height: **6'0**

Weight: **235**

College: **AUBURN**



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LAVONTE

DAVID

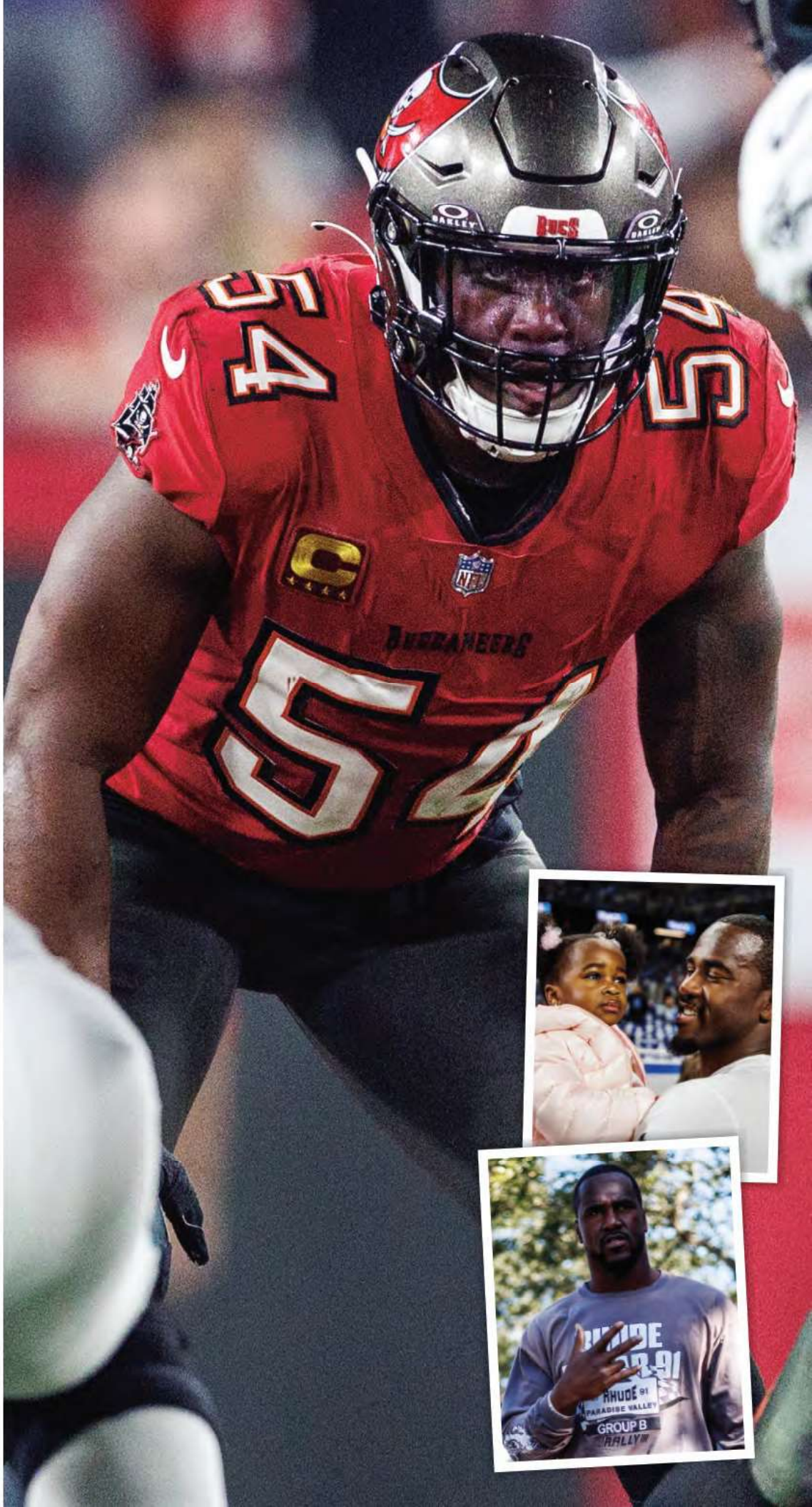
#54

LB

Height: **6'1**

Weight: **233**

College: **NEBRASKA**



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54

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GOEDEKE
67

88

BUCCANEERS
6

BRITT

PALMER
10
EVANS
13

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LUKE GOEDEKE

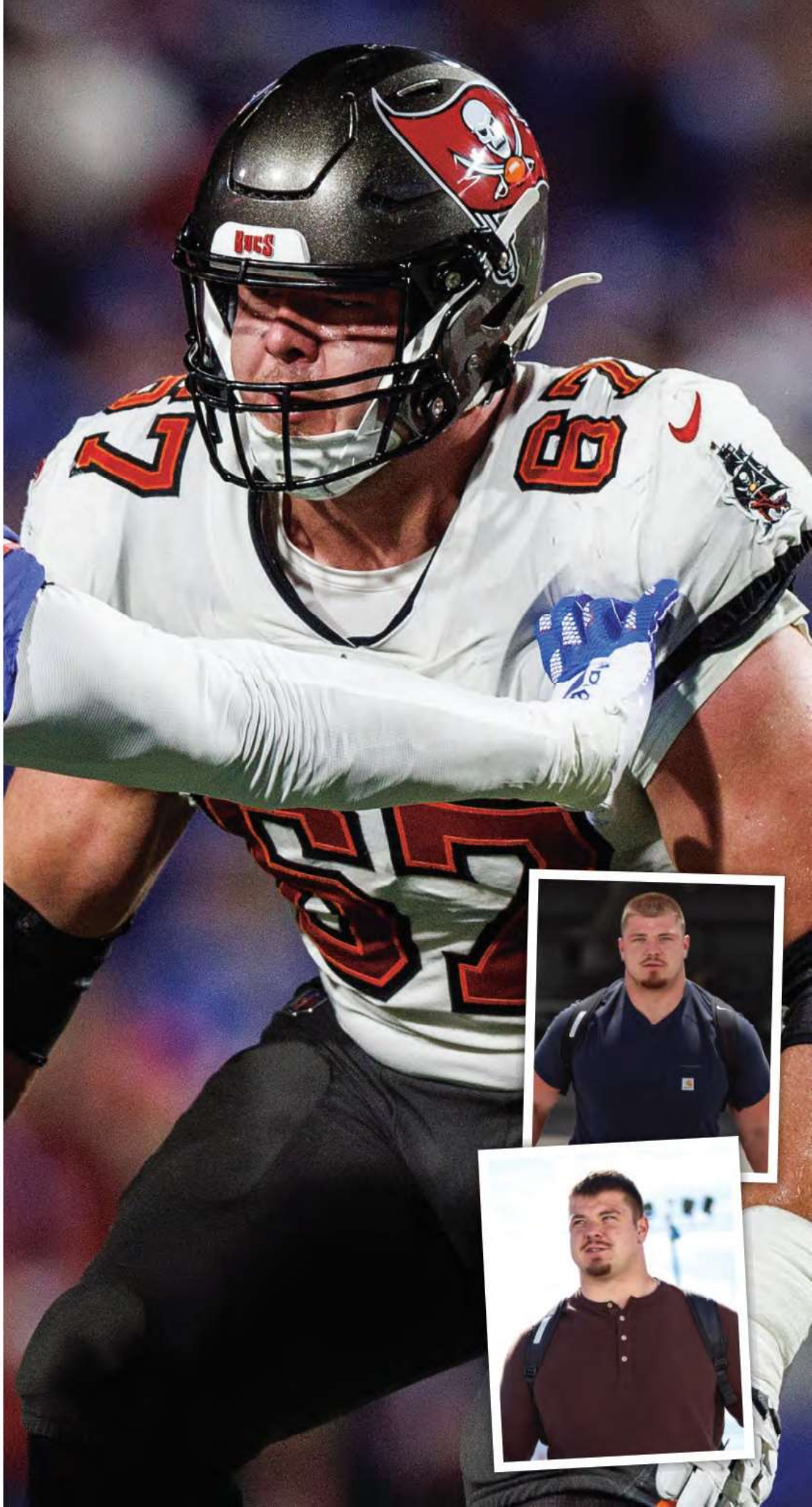
#67

T

Height: **6'5**

Weight: **312**

College:
CENTRAL MICHIGAN



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We provide hands-on assistance to help retired players and their families deal with the hardships they face after football.

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- Medication
- Pro bono surgeries
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Mike Golic

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Marc Badain

Vinnie Hudson

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BREDESON

#68

G

Height: **6'5**

Weight: **315**

College: **MICHIGAN**

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CODY

MAUCH

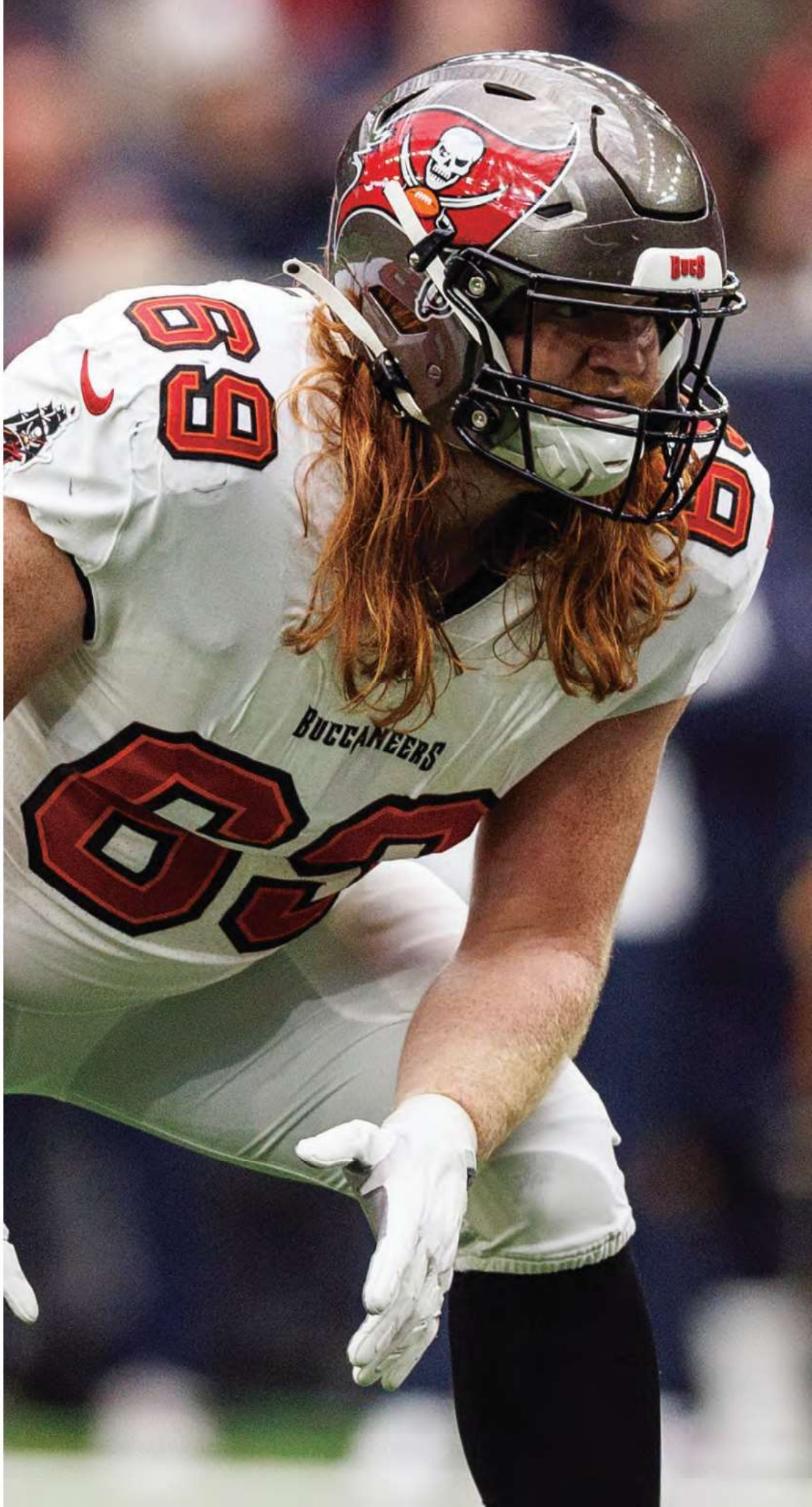
#69

G

Height: **6'6**

Weight: **303**

College:
NORTH DAKOTA STATE



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WHAT WE DO

We reduce homelessness, suicide, improve health and wellness, and much more! Veterans and Athletes come together weekly for a formal physical training and peer to peer support session called, "The Huddle," at no cost to them! This allows them to rebuild themselves mentally, physically and emotionally.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

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ROBERT

HAINSEY

#70

C

Height: **6'4**

Weight: **306**

College: **NOTRE DAME**

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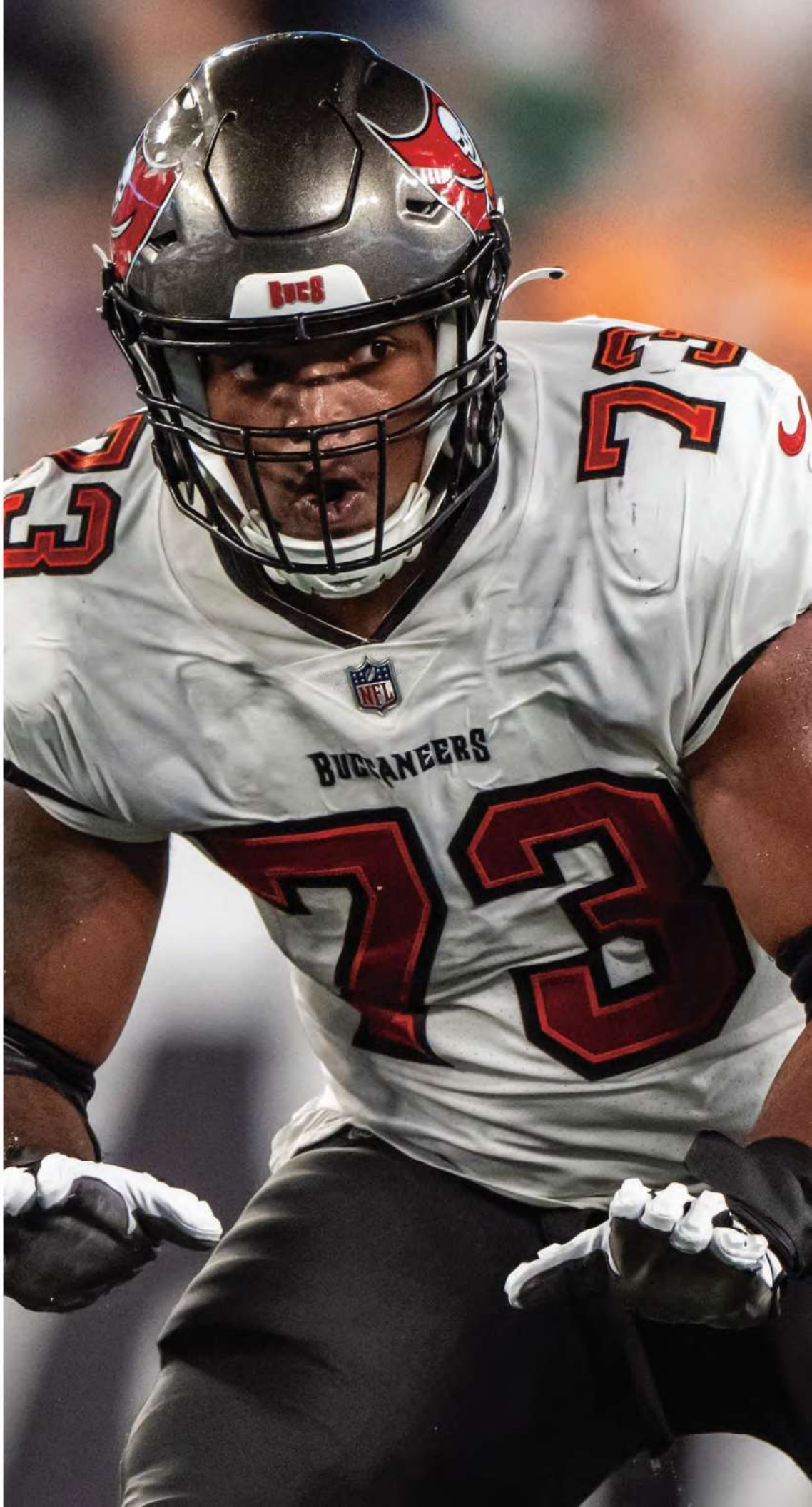

BRANDON WALTON

#73

OL

Height: **6'5**

Weight: **300**

College:
FLORIDA ATLANTIC

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EARNEST

BROWN IV

#74

DL

Height: **6'5**

Weight: **300**

College: **NORTHWESTERN**

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SUA OPETA

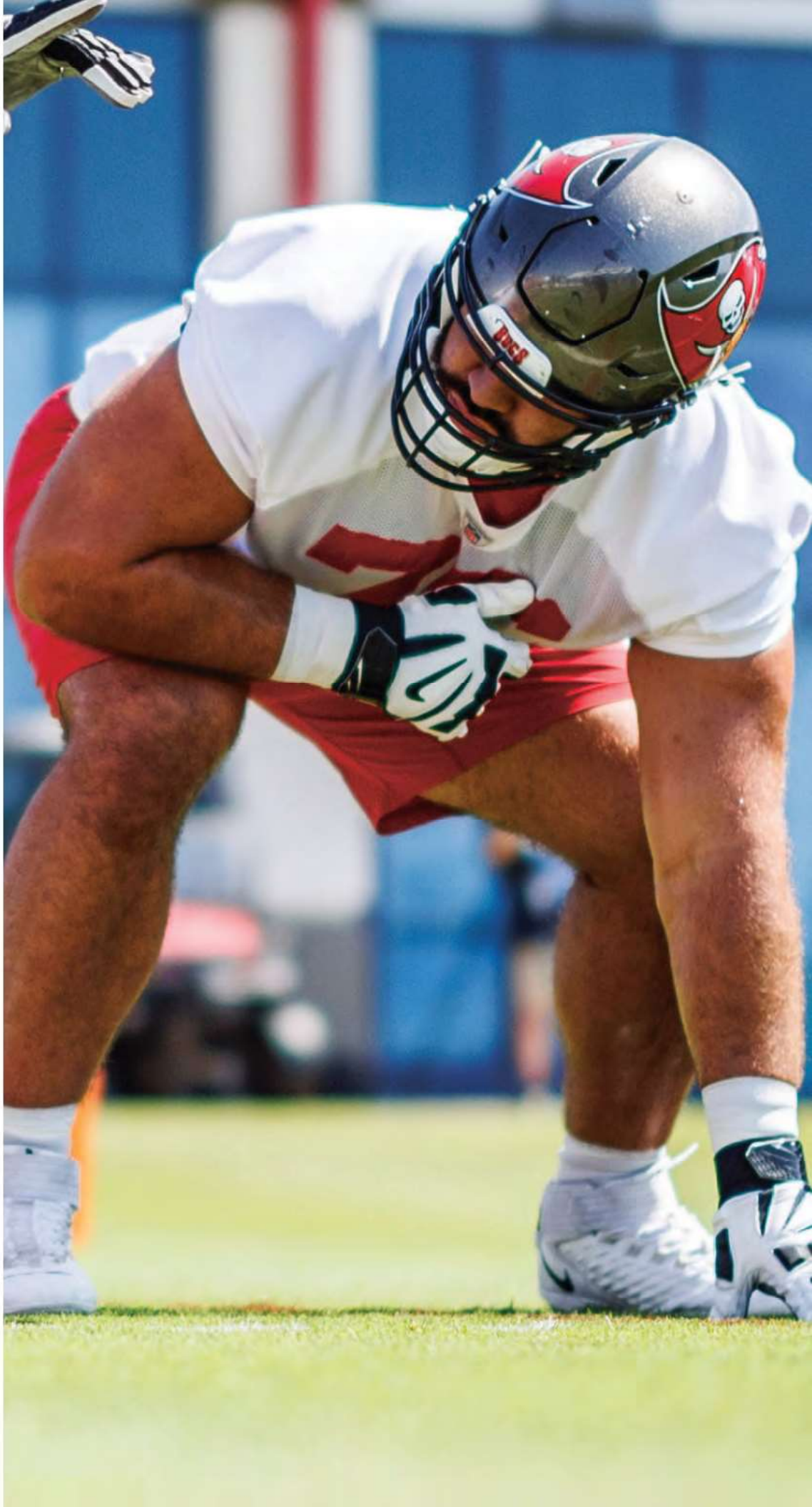
#76

G

Height: **6'4**

Weight: **305**

College: **WEBER STATE**



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JUSTIN

SKULE

#77

T

Height: **6'6**

Weight: **315**

College: **VANDERBILT**

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TRISTAN WIRFS

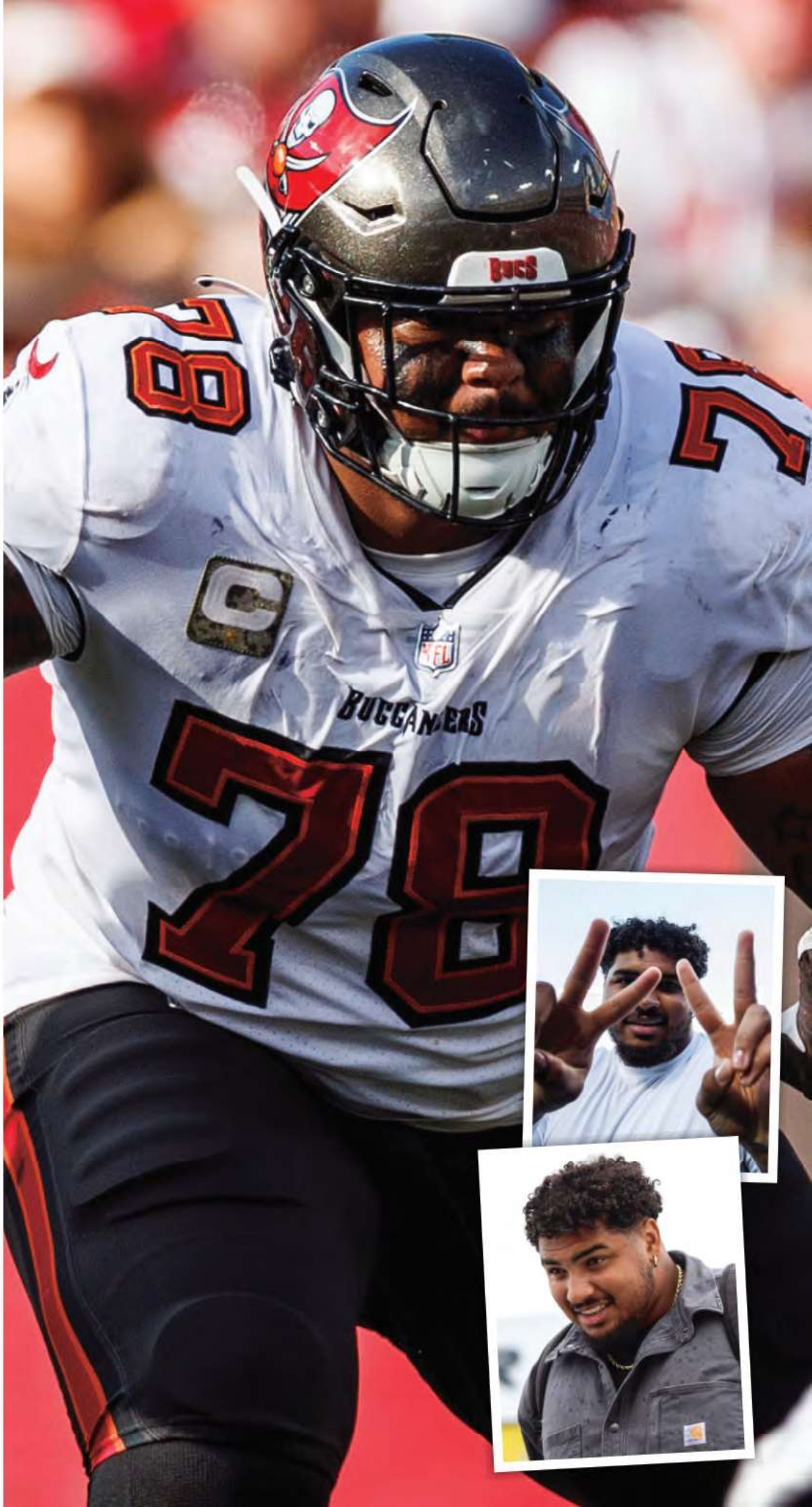
#78

T

Height: **6'5**

Weight: **320**

College: **IOWA**



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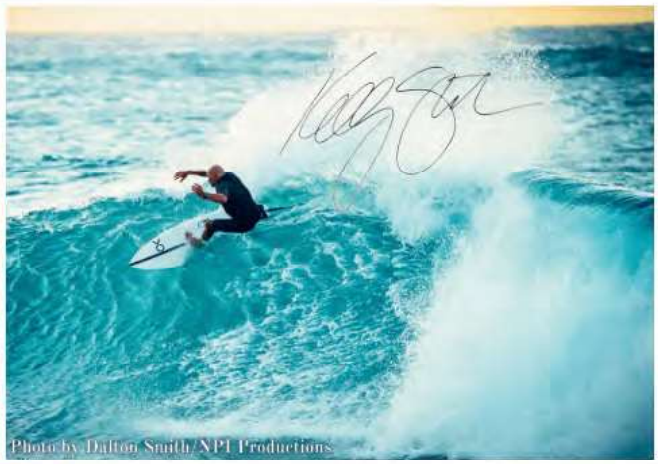

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CODY THOMPSON

#83

WR

Height: **6'2**

Weight: **205**

College: **TOLEDO**

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DURHAM

#87

TE

Height: **6'5**

Weight: **255**

College: **PURDUE**

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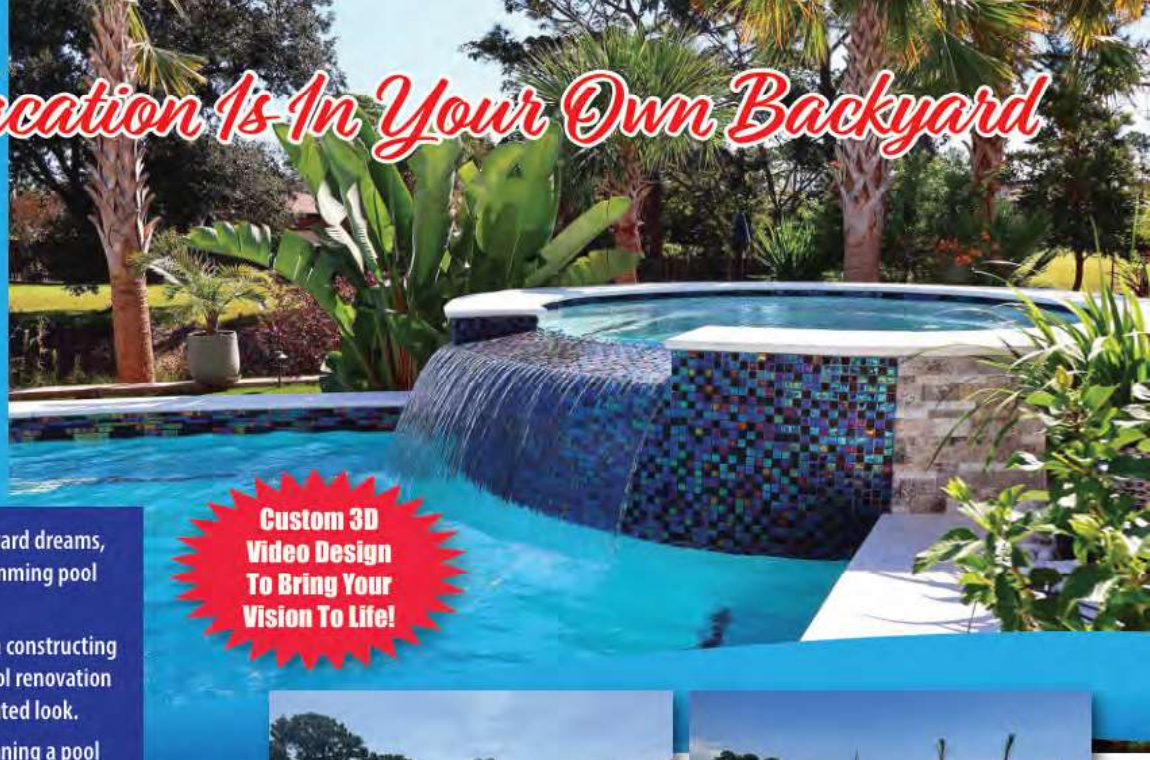

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CADE OTTON

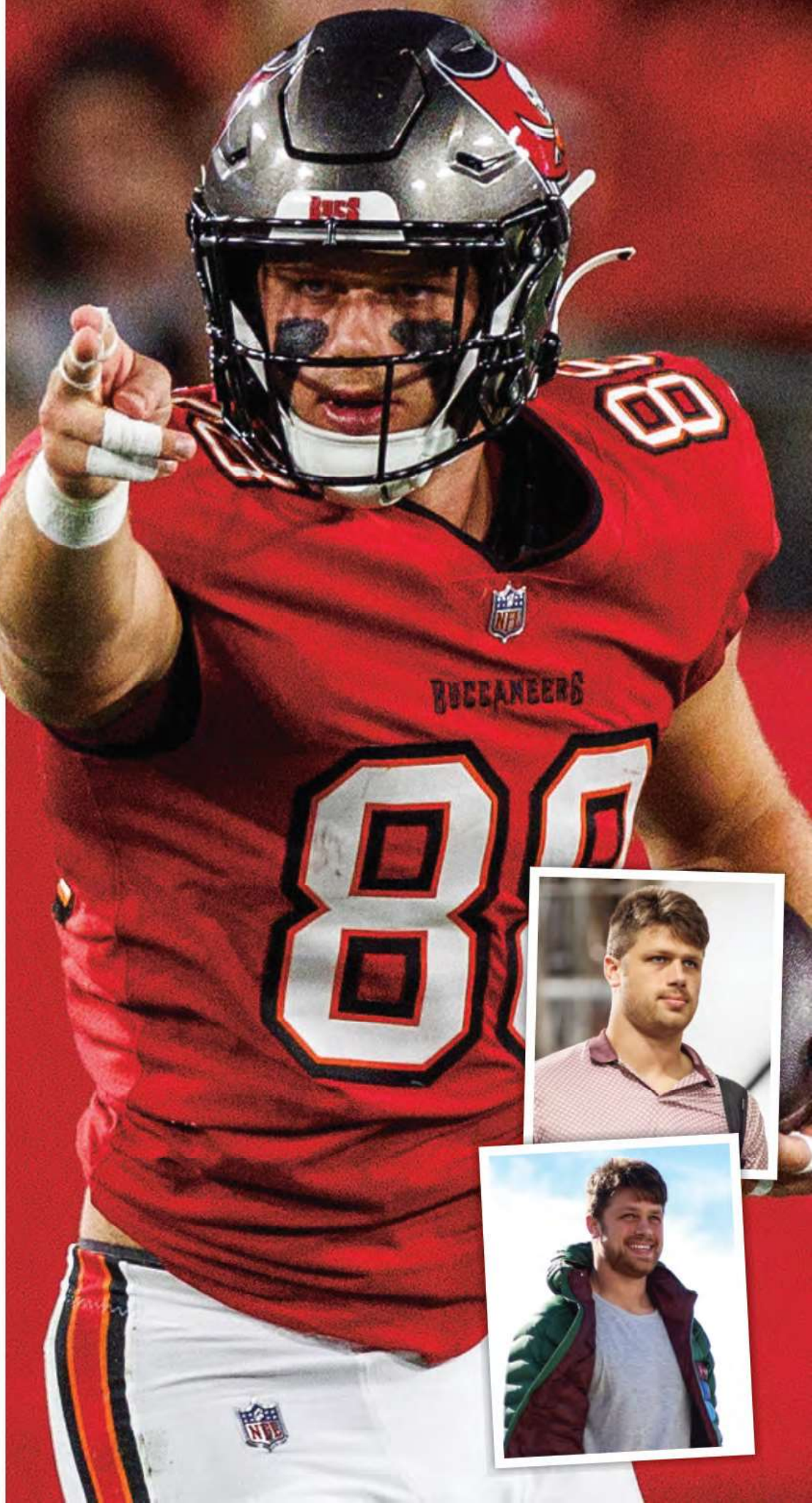
#88

TE

Height: **6'5**

Weight: **247**

College: **WASHINGTON**



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DAVID WELLS

#89

TE

Height: **6'6**

Weight: **260**

College:
SAN DIEGO STATE

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LOGAN

HALL

#90

DL

Height: **6'6**

Weight: **283**

College: **HOUSTON**

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MIKE GREENE

#91

DL

Height: **6'3**

Weight: **293**

College: **JAMES MADISON**

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WILLIAM GHOLSTON

#92

DL

Height: **6'6**

Weight: **281**

College: **MICHIGAN STATE**

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CALIJAH KANCEY

#94

DL

Height: **6'0**

Weight: **280**

College: **PITTSBURGH**

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GREG GAINES

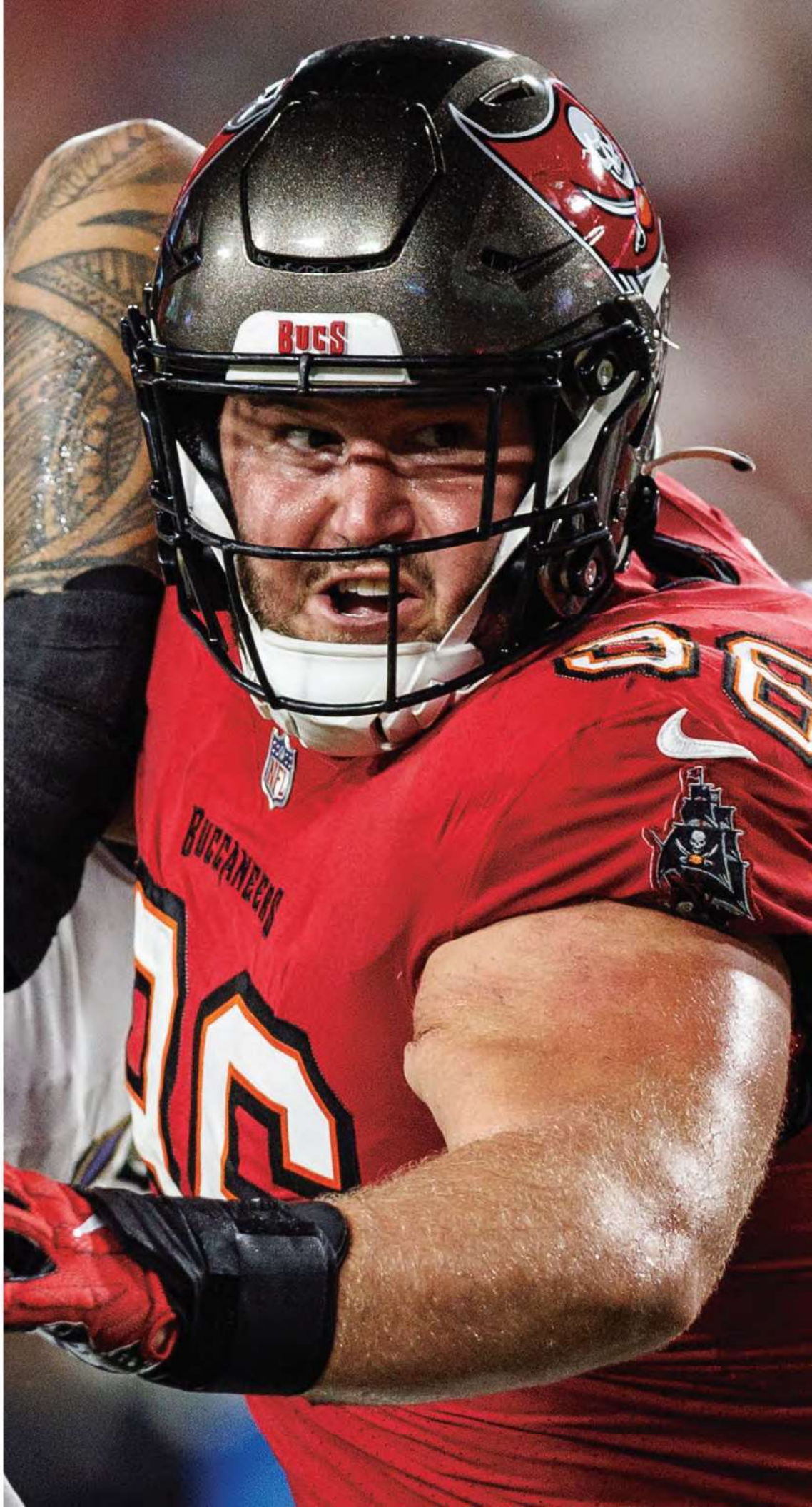
#96

DL

Height: **6'1**

Weight: **312**

College: **WASHINGTON**



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ZACH TRINER

#97

LS

Height: **6'3**

Weight: **245**

College: **ASSUMPTION**

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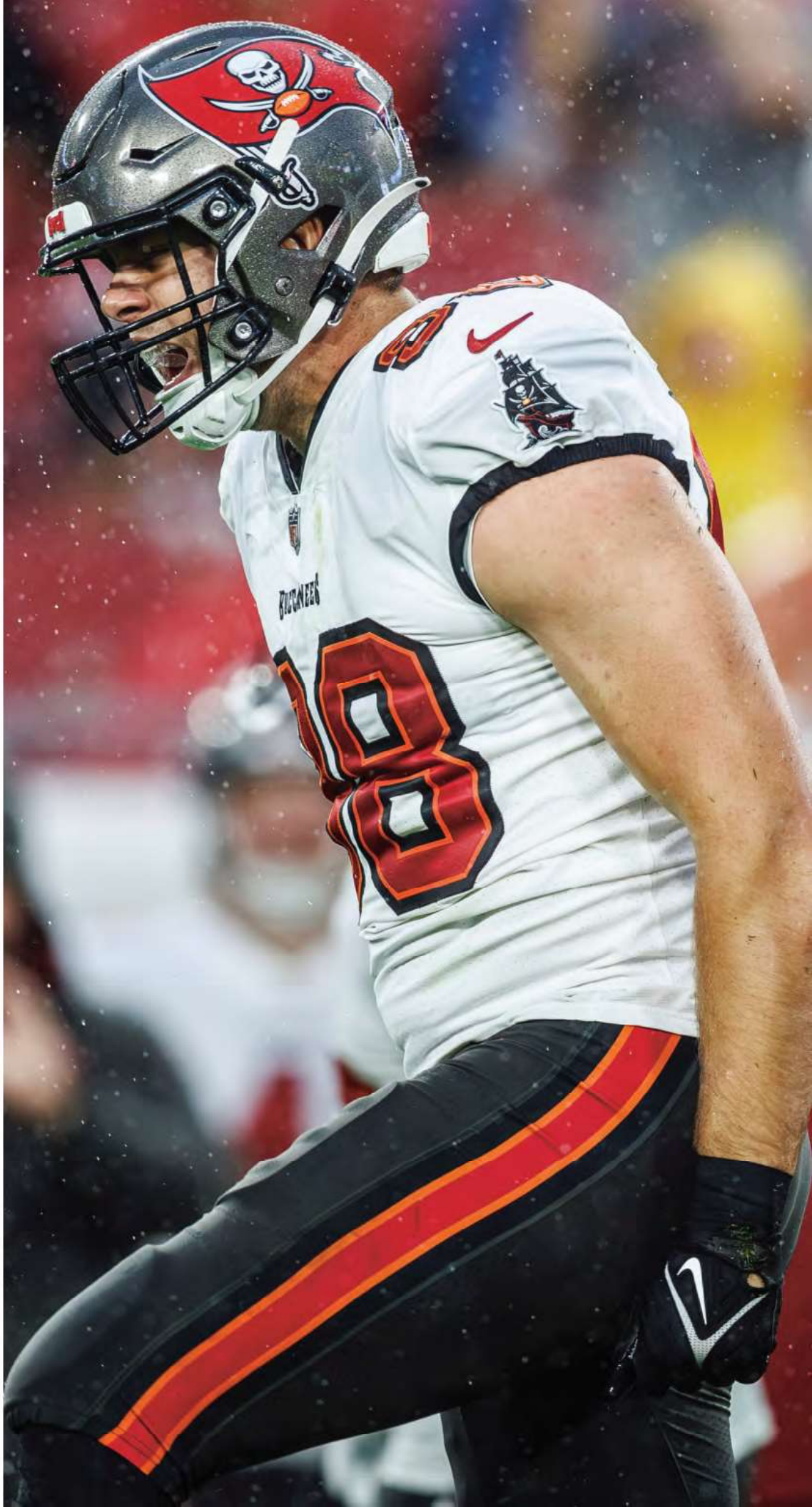

ANTHONY NELSON

#98

OLB

Height: **6'7**

Weight: **271**

College: **IOWA**

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KAMERON
JOHNSON
#9
WR

Height: 5'10
Weight: 170
College: BARTON

KEENAN
ISAAC
#16
CB

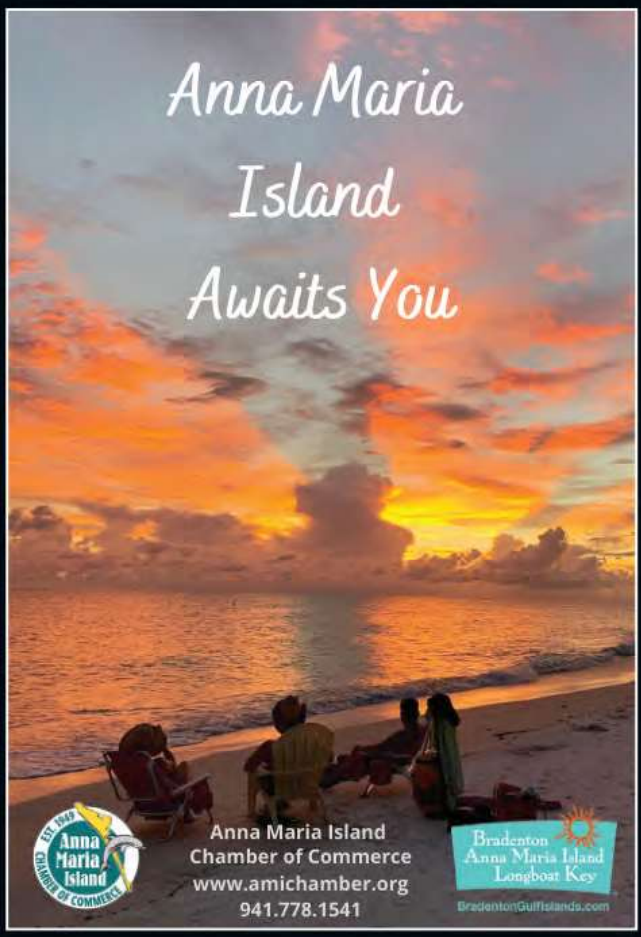
Height: 6'3
Weight: 190
College: ALABAMA STATE

RALEIGH
WEBB
#17
WR

Height: 6'2
Weight: 204
College: THE CITADEL

RAKIM
JARRETT
#18
WR

Height: 6'0
Weight: 192
College: MARYLAND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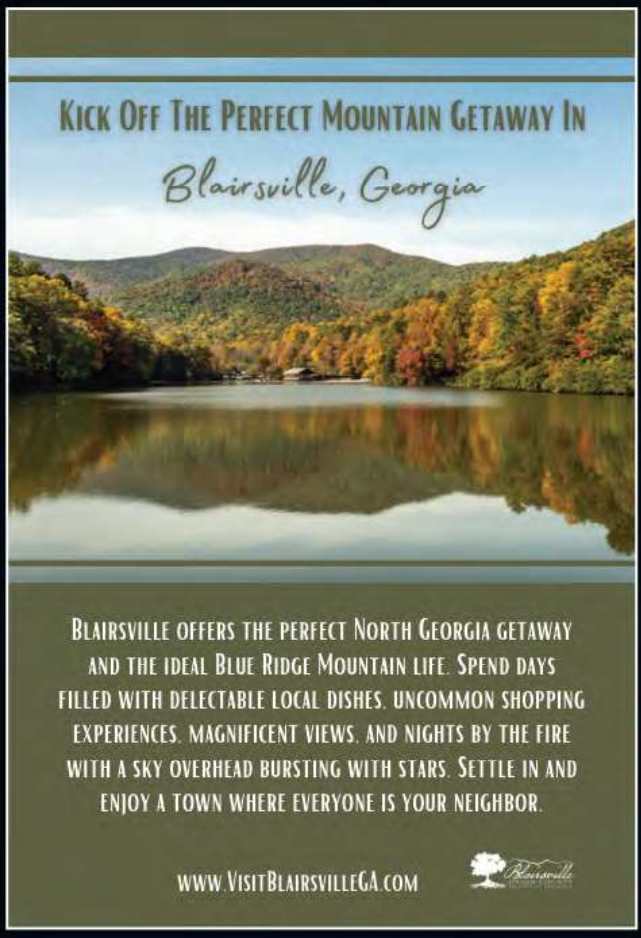
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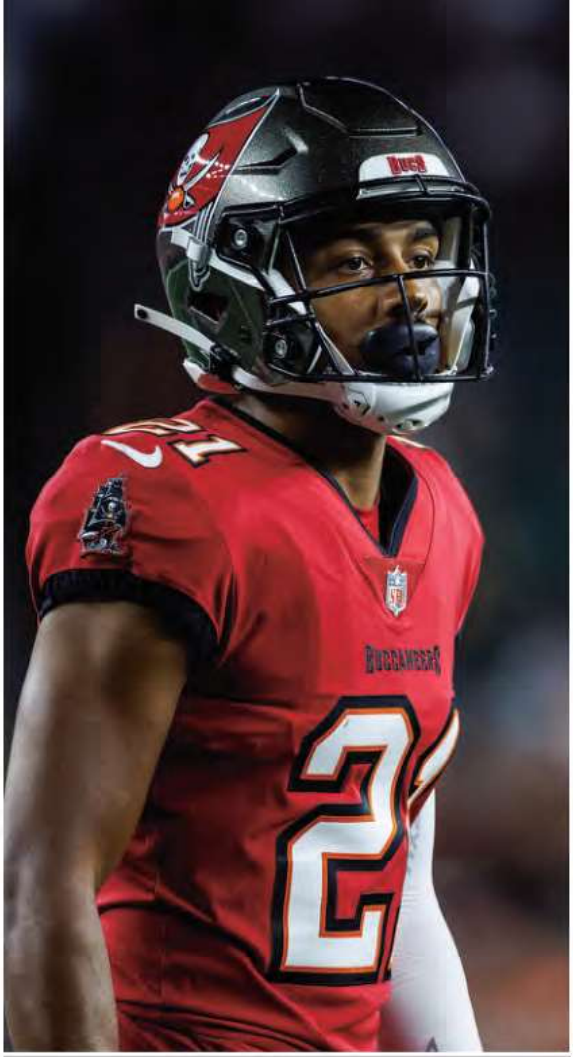
ANDREW
HAYES
#21
CB

Height: 6'0
Weight: 195
College: CENTRAL ARKANSAS



TYREK
FUNDERBURK
#24
CB

Height: 6'0
Weight: 185
College: APPALACHIAN STATE

KAEVON
MERRIWEATHER
#26
S

Height: 6'0
Weight: 212
College: IOWA

CEPHUS
JOHNSON III
#28
WR

Height: 6'5
Weight: 220
College: SOUTHEASTERN LOUISIANA

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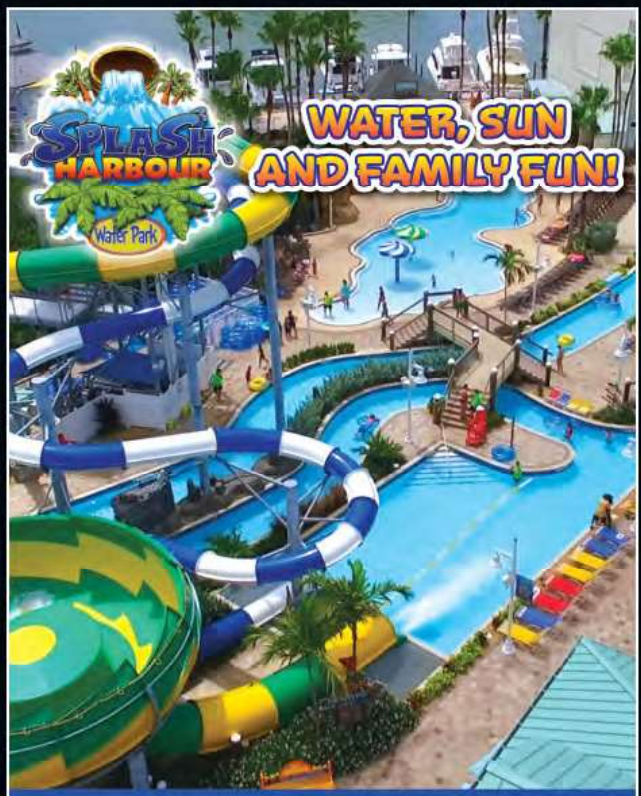

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#30
RB

Height: 6'0
Weight: 225
College: ARIZONA

JOSE
RAMIREZ
#33
OLB

Height: 6'2
Weight: 252
College: EASTERN MICHIGAN

CHRIS
McDONALD JR.
#36
CB

Height: 5'10
Weight: 192
College: TOLEDO

RASHAD
WISDOM
#38
S

Height: 5'9
Weight: 210
College: TEXAS-SAN ANTONIO

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Height: 6'0
Weight: 190
College: MISSISSIPPI STATE

JAY
PERSON
#44
OLB

Height: 6'2
Weight: 237
College: TENNESSEE-CHATTANOOGA

SEAN
TUCKER
#44
RB

Height: 5'10
Weight: 205
College: SYRACUSE

RAMON
JEFFERSON
#45
RB

Height: 5'10
Weight: 210
College: KENTUCKY

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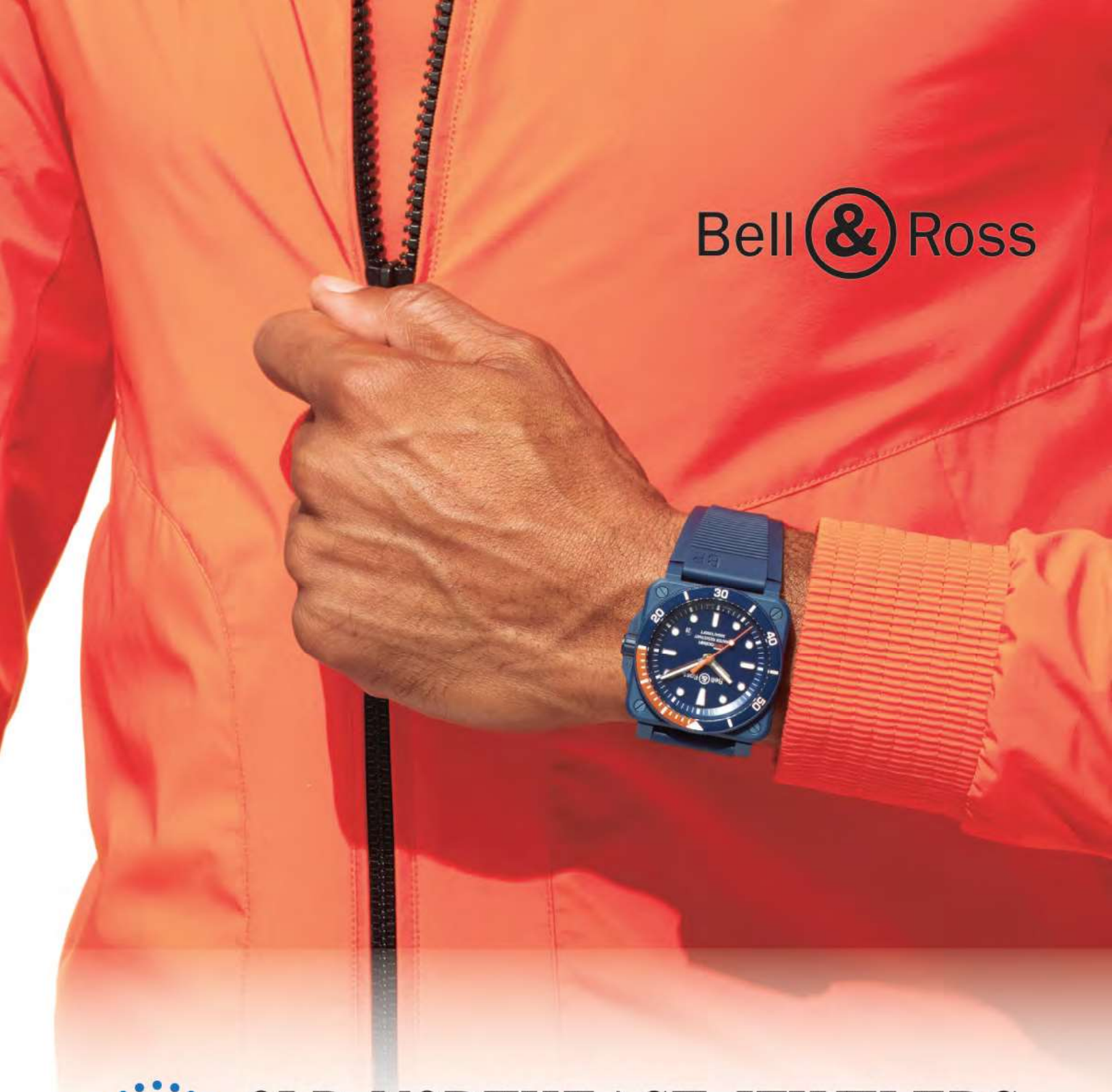
KALEN
DeLOACH
#46
LB
Height: 6'1
Weight: 212
College: FLORIDA STATE

ANTONIO
GRIER JR.
#48
LB
Height: 6'1
Weight: 230
College: ARKANSAS

SAL
CANNELLA
#49
TE
Height: 6'5
Weight: 242
College: AUBURN

SHAUN
PETERSON JR.
#49
OLB
Height: 6'3
Weight: 240
College: CENTRAL FLORIDA



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JONES
#53
LB

Height: 6'2
Weight: 225
College: NORTH CAROLINA STATE

DANIEL
GRZESIAK
#57
OLB

Height: 6'1
Weight: 245
College: CINCINNATI

MARKEES
WATTS
#58
OLB

Height: 6'1
Weight: 240
College: CHARLOTTE

JUDGE
CULPEPPER
#59
DL

Height: 6'4
Weight: 293
College: TOLEDO

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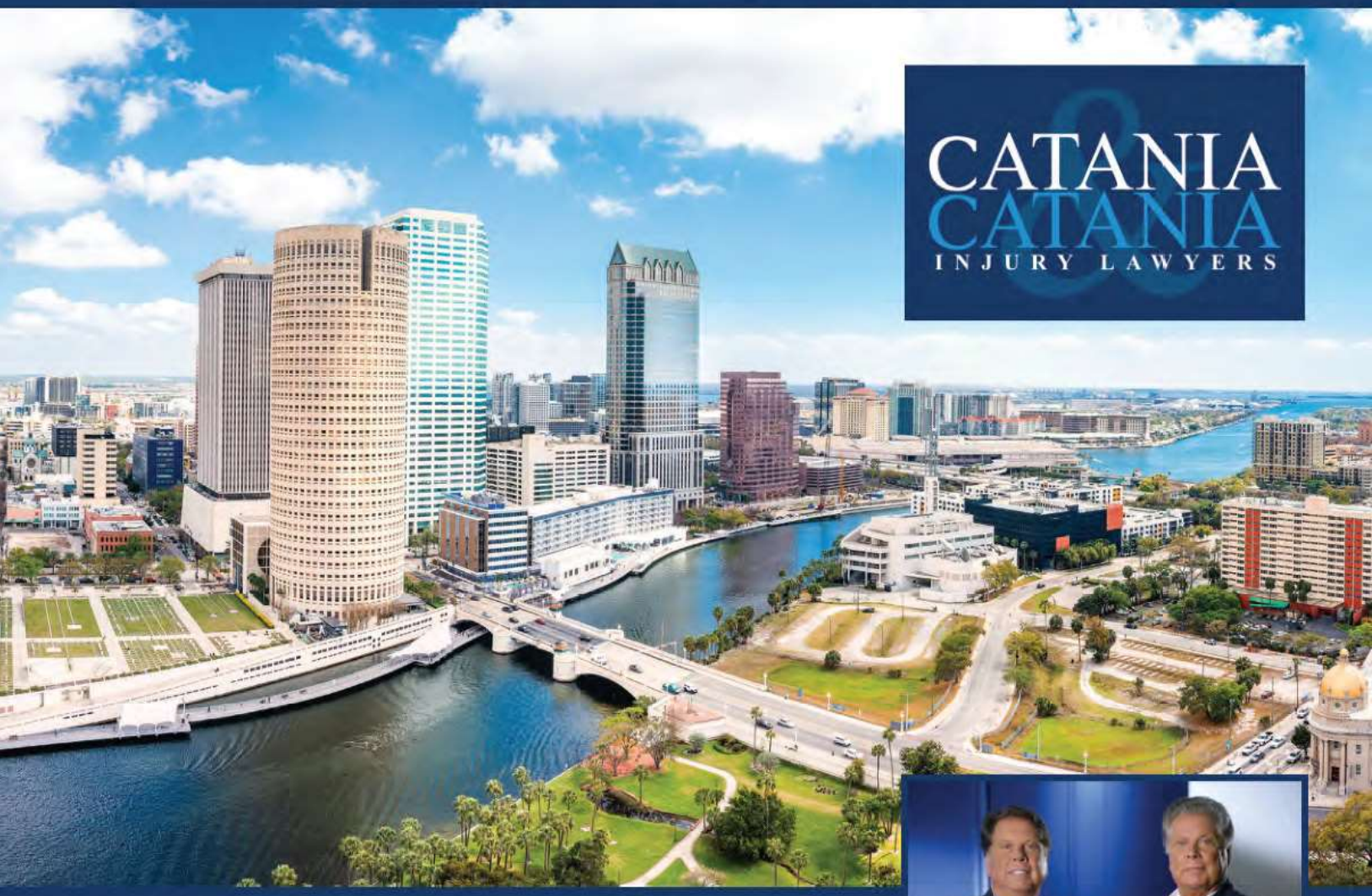

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XAVIER
DELGADO
#60
G

Height: 6'4
Weight: 329
College: MISSOURI

AVERY
JONES
#66
G

Height: 6'4
Weight: 307
College: AUBURN

LORENZ
METZ
#71
OL

Height: 6'9
Weight: 310
College: CINCINNATI

LUKE
HAGGARD
#72
OL

Height: 6'7
Weight: 305
College: INDIANA

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LWAL
UGUAK
#75
DL

Height: 6'4
Weight: 269
College: TCU

TANNER
KNUE
#80
WR

Height: 5'11
Weight: 178
College: EASTERN MICHIGAN

RYAN
MILLER
#81
WR

Height: 6'2
Weight: 221
College: FURMAN

TANNER
TAULA
#84
TE

Height: 6'6
Weight: 255
College: ILLINOIS STATE

LATREAL
JONES
#85
WR
Height: 6'1
Weight: 195
College: SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI

EVAN
DECKERS
#86
LS
Height: 6'3
Weight: 252
College: DUKE

C.J.
BREWER
#95
DL
Height: 6'2
Weight: 290
College: COASTAL CAROLINA

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GRAHAM BARTON

#62

C

Height: **6'5**

Weight: **314**

College: **DUKE**

ROUND #2
PICK 25

CHRIS
BRASWELL

#43

OLB

Height: **6'3**

Weight: **255**

College: **ALABAMA**

TYKEE SMITH

#23

S

Height: **5'10**

Weight: **202**

College: **GEORGIA**

NFL
Loyalty

JALEN McMILLAN

#15

WR

Height: **6'1**

Weight: **192**

College: **WASHINGTON**

ROUND #4
PICK 25

BUCKY
IRVING

#7

RB

Height: **5'10**

Weight: **195**

College: **OREGON**

ROUND #6
PICK 44

ELIJAH KLEIN

#79

G

Height: 6'4

Weight: 319

College: TEXAS-EL PASO

DEVIN CULP

#82

TE

Height: **6'4**

Weight: **237**

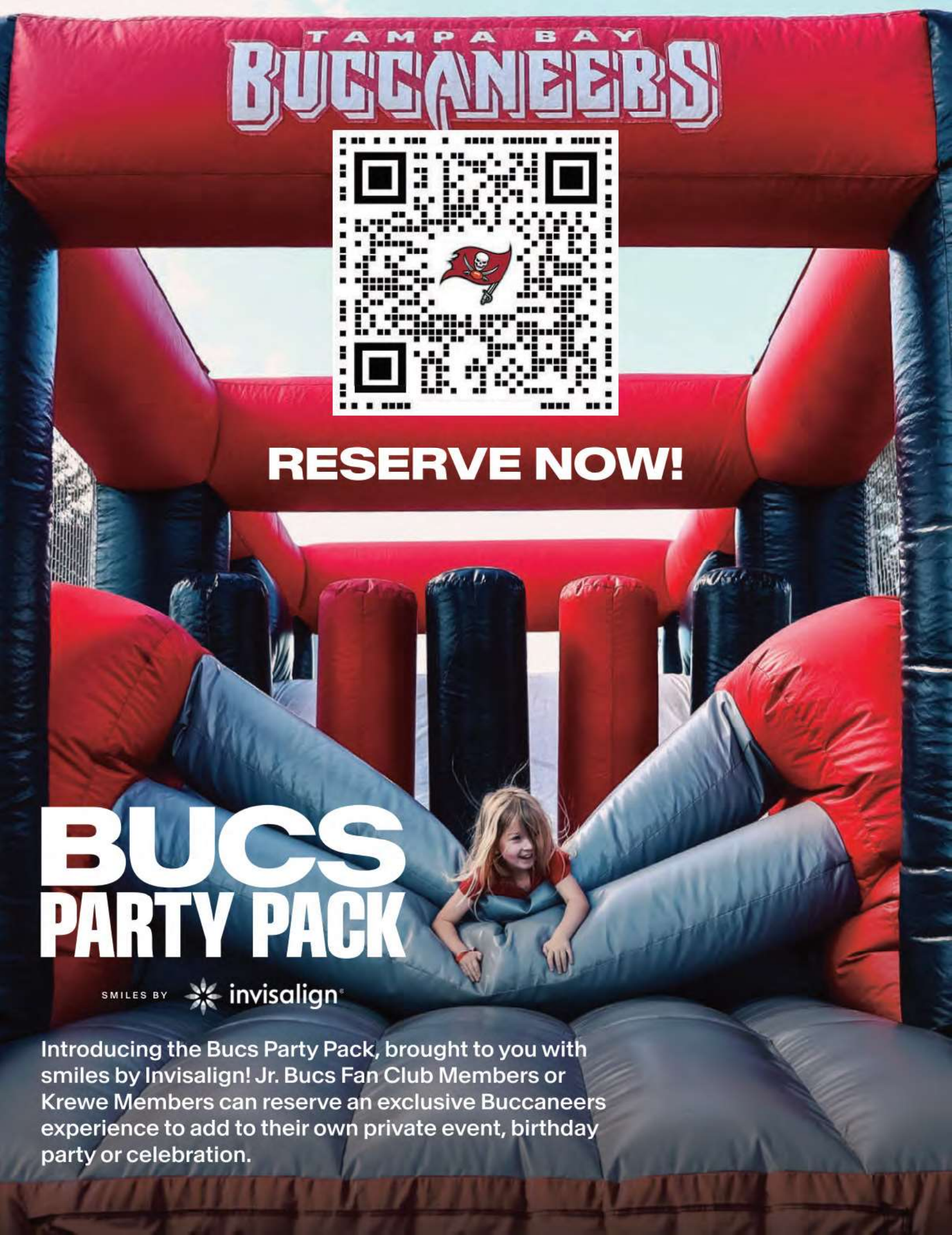
College: **WASHINGTON**

FOOTBALL FOR ALL

Here at the Buccaneers, we strongly believe football is a game for everyone – those who love to play, coach, and watch. To deliver on this belief, we work directly with local teachers, school administrators, physical education instructors, and coaches to grow the game and the fan base. With the partnership of Tampa Bay community leaders, the Buccaneers provide health and fitness programs, a football development curriculum and equipment, and overall inspiration to enhance student education and overall wellness.

FOOTBALL DEVELOPMENT/STUDENT WELLNESS

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT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FOOTBALL FOR IMPACT

The Buccaneers recognize the power of our platform to drive positive and sustainable change for the greater Tampa Bay community. This is why we are committed to designing impactful programs with the community to address areas of disparity and opportunity. As a result, the Buccaneers launched the Social Justice Initiative in 2018 and the Tampa Bay Buccaneers National Coaching Academy in 2024. The team is also at the forefront of all gender equality efforts, including establishing a first-of-its-kind flag football tournament and scholarships for girls in football.

FIRST OF ITS KIND: TAMPA BAY BUCCANEERS NATIONAL COACHING ACADEMY

AN NFL FIRST: GIRLS IN FOOTBALL SCHOLARSHIP

In 2020, the Buccaneers Foundation presented the inaugural Girls In Football Scholarship, becoming the first NFL team to establish a nationwide academic scholarship program for female high school football players pursuing a career in sports. The scholarship was made possible through a $250,000 commitment from the Foundation.

SOCIAL JUSTICE

THE OFFICIAL TAMPA BAY BUCCANEERS FAN CLUB

All fans ages 14 and under are welcome.

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FOOTBALL SALUTES

The Buccaneers celebrate military heroes who proudly serve our country and community. Throughout the year, the team collaborates with the MacDill Air Force base and various community partners to plan memorable gameday experiences and exclusive events in their honor. Efforts include a Salute to Service Suite, the Schwarzkopf Military Family of the Year Awards, Military Day at Training Camp, and more.

GLAZER VISION FOUNDATION

For over a decade, the Glazer Vision Foundation has been committed to full-treatment vision correction for underserved children by providing more than 200,000 free eye screenings and over 20,000 free pairs of prescription glasses throughout Tampa Bay. The Mobile Vision Clinic is the centerpiece of the Foundation's commitment to providing same-day eye care services directly to children in Tampa's communities – all at no charge to families.

Help create awareness while supporting children in need! Simply share a photo or selfie wearing glasses (or using the @ glazervisionfdn Instagram filter), and post on social media tagging @glazervisionfdn and #OneShareOnePair and the Glazer Vision Foundation will provide a child with a free eye exam and glasses – thanks to you!

#ONESHAREONEPAIR

20 CHEERLEADERS 24

Since 1976, the Tampa Bay Buccaneers Cheerleaders have served as ambassadors for one of the most distinguished franchises in the NFL, captivating Tampa Bay's avid fans, performing to worldwide acclaim, and cheering on the team to two Super Bowl titles.

The 30 athletes that comprise the dynamic squad are chosen from hundreds of candidates each year. On top of being talented performers, Buccaneers Cheerleaders represent a variety of professional fields including education, healthcare, real estate, dance, public policy and more. They are committed to supporting the Buccaneers on game days at Raymond James Stadium and at community events and corporate appearances throughout the year.

In addition to their work in the West Central Florida region, the Tampa Bay Buccaneers Cheerleaders serve as ambassadors for the organization all over the United States and beyond, traveling to locations in Asia, Europe, and Australia to entertain and connect with the best fans in the NFL.

McKENNA
Captain

RACHAEL
Captain

SHANNON
Captain

SOPHIA
Captain

ALYSSA

AMANDA L

AMANDA O

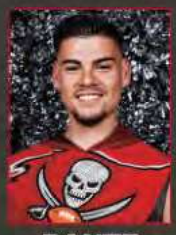
ANALISA

ARIELLE

AVERY

AYSIA

DANIEL



DANTE

ELLA

FAITH

HALEY

JASMINE

JESSICA

JESSIE

JORDYN

KIMBERLY

MADELYN

OLIVIA

RANDOLPH

REBEKAH

RYLIE

SARA

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TAYLOR

TRINITY

CAPTAIN
FEAR
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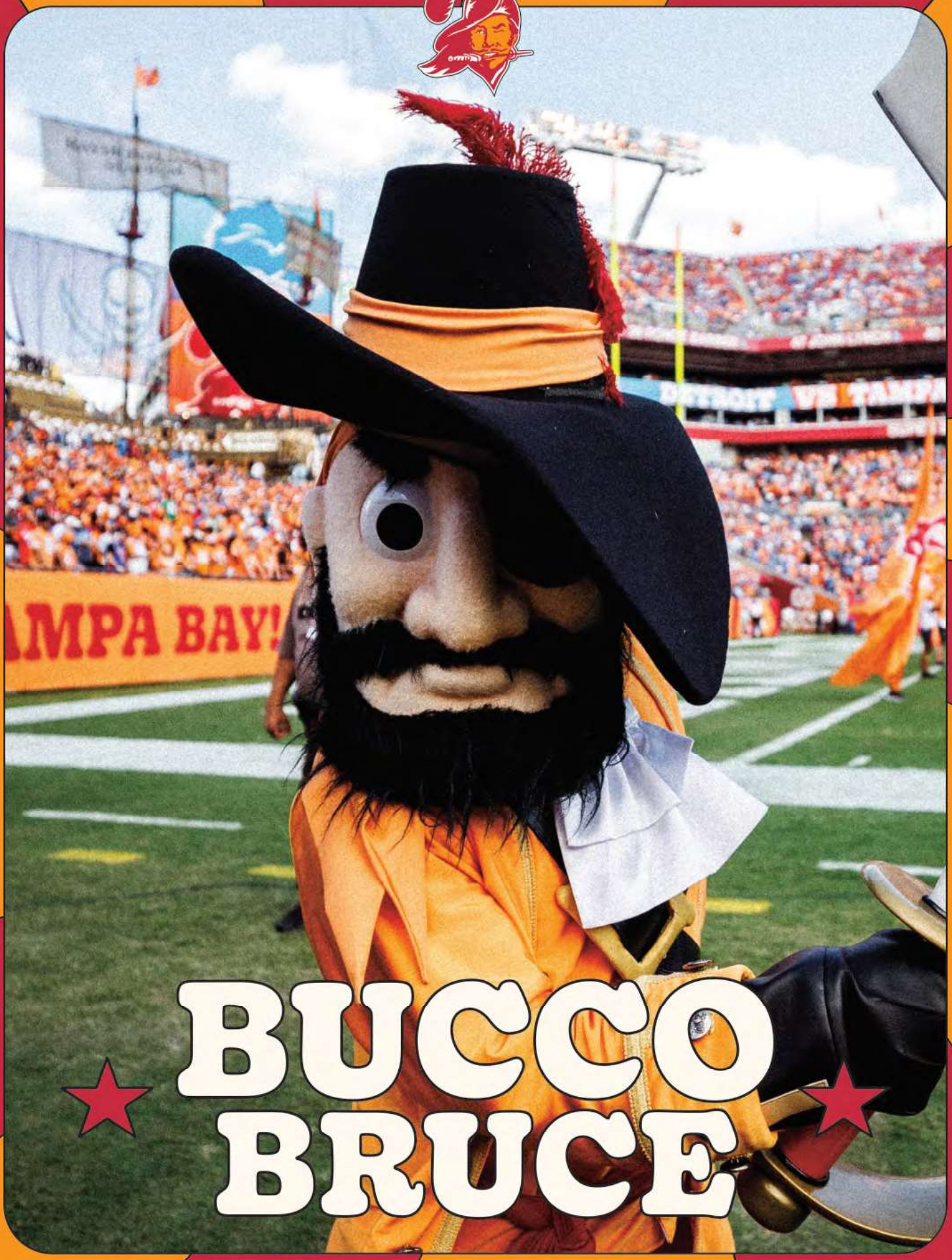

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